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DUNGEON®

A Dungeons & Dragons® Roleplaying Game Supplement

DUNGEON®

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ABOUT THE COVER: *Adventurers feel the heat as they assault a volcanic fortress in Craig J Spearing's feature illustration for "Some Like It Hot."*

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Senior Producer	**Christopher Perkins**
Producers	**Greg Bilsland, Steve Winter**
Managing Editor	**Miranda Horner**
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Graphic Production Specialist	**Jessica Dubey**
Digital Studio Consultant	**Josh Dillard**
Contributing Authors	**Stacey Janssen, Shawn Merwin, John "Ross" Rossomangno**
Contributing Editors	**Dawn J. Geluso, Ray Vallese**
Contributing Artists	**Chippy, Emrah Elmasli, Ralph Horsley, Tyler Jacobson, Howard Lyon, William O'Connor, Chris Seaman, Craig J Spearing, Beth Trott**
Cartography	**Jared Blando, Jason A. Engle**

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Treasure Trove

By Christopher Perkins

I've been writing adventures since I was ten, I collect adventures as a hobby, and I read adventures for fun. I just finished working on two of my own: *Ghost of Dragonspear Castle*™, available at Gen Con, and *Ark of the Mad Mage*, designed for the next series of Penny Arcade podcasts leading up to our annual D&D Live Game at PAX. My next adventure project is a sequel to *Mines of Madness*™, which I co-wrote with Scott Kurtz (of *Table Titans* fame) for PAX East. It's nice to know there's always some new adventure on the horizon.

Jeremy Crawford and I were discussing our mutual love of adventures and how married we are to our *Dungeon* collections. In its 27-year history, *Dungeon* has published more than 800 adventures. Although most of them are tied to earlier editions of the game, they are still precious, if only for the maps, villains, and story ideas they contain. The magazine is an ever-growing treasure trove waiting to be plundered, and any good DM can strip away the old-edition elements, take what's left, and make the most of it.

I've probably used less than 5 percent of all the adventure content ever published in *Dungeon*, and yet these adventures are all immensely valuable to me—so much so that given the choice between keeping my *Dungeon* collection or my job, I'd probably choose the former. I primarily collect adventures because I enjoy reading them, and I read adventures mostly for inspiration. Would I like to run every adventure? You bet! In reality, I can't. That said, every adventure I read fills my head with ideas and makes me a better adventure writer. Novelists talk about how their writing is influenced by literary predecessors, and artists admire the work of other artists. Adventures inspire, educate, and motivate me, as they do for many other DMs.

I remember the day I received *Dungeon* 1 in the mail. I read it from cover to cover, starting with "The Dark Tower of Cabilar" and ending with "Guardians of the Tomb." In the days and weeks that followed, all I wanted to do was write my own adventures, and I wrote a bunch of them (none worthy of publication, mind you). Twenty-seven years later, things haven't changed. When I dive into the submissions inbox or read the first draft of an adventure that made it from pitch to complete manuscript, a tiny little demon claws at my brain, and I get a sudden urge to write an adventure of my own. I don't always follow through, but the urge is strong. It's an urge I hope I never lose.

It's hard to find adventures that are perfect for my campaign. You think this wouldn't be an issue for me, since I'm the guy who decides what gets published in *Dungeon* and what doesn't. I could pay people to design adventures tailor-made for my campaign, but "providing adventures for Chris Perkins's home campaign" is not *Dungeon*'s mission statement and ultimately wouldn't appeal to anyone (not even me).

Every DM needs adventures; however, unless he or she is running a complete, published campaign such as *The Shackled City*™ or *Age of Worms*™, a DM can't rely on other people to create more than a fraction of the adventure content that the campaign demands. The value of *Dungeon* isn't just the adventures it provides, but the ideas and the inspiration that every DM needs to create his or her stuff.

Some Like It Hot

A D&D® adventure for characters of levels 17-20

By John "Ross" Rossomangno

Illustrations by Craig J Spearing

Cartography by Jason A. Engle

Through his reckless pursuit of power, the pyromancer Hazakhul doomed himself and his followers to undeath. But his obsession with fire lives on, and now he seeks to channel the last spark of a forgotten primordial's life force. He has allied with a band of efreets who share the mysteries of the Elemental Chaos with Hazakhul in exchange for residents abducted from the valley below his volcanic retreat.

The player characters must free the settlements from the pyromancer's tyranny, and they must also end his increasingly dangerous efforts to harness conflagrations beyond his control.

Background

The valley known as Starpine Vale is home to a number of farming and logging communities. In an effort to make the valley more self-sufficient, pioneer and entrepreneur Timos Bergan oversaw the

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construction of roads linking some of the towns and villages as well as the building of the fortress at Bergan's Gap. He knew even a small force could hold the narrow pass and ensure the safety of the entire valley should dark times fall across the lands.

The arrival of the elf wizard Hazakhul went largely unnoticed by most villagers at the time. At most, they regarded his ascent into the mountains as the behavior of an eccentric wizard who required solitude. When the occasional raids of humanoids from the mountains ceased entirely, the people of the valley counted themselves lucky for the wizard's appearance.

In truth, Hazakhul came to the mountains seeking the last vestiges of a fiery primordial's spirit beneath a dormant volcano. He did not care about the raids suffered by the residents of the valley. The humanoid tribes that once troubled them were enslaved by the pyromancer. Along with his new allies, a troupe of giants, they constructed a retreat for his studies.

In a flawed attempt to recover the primordial spirit, Hazakhul triggered a devastating, cataclysmic eruption. An unexpected by-product of the ritual channeled forces from the Elemental Chaos into the heart of his stronghold. The pyromancer and his servants perished, but twisted fire and necromancy reanimated them into undead creatures.

Attempting to refine his failed ritual, Hazakhul secured the aid of efreets from the Elemental Chaos. In return for slaves, the efreets promised lore that would strengthen the ritual intended to contain the primordial's lingering energy. The pyromancer initially offered his humanoid followers. After his supply was exhausted, he looked to the people of Starpine Vale.

Hazakhul sealed off the valley by capturing the fortress at Bergan's Gap. To discourage visitors, he sent agents into the surrounding lands to spread word of a deadly plague in the valley. He then struck a one-sided bargain with Timos Bergan: If Bergan contributed two dozen captives each month, the pyromancer would spare the valley's settlements. This ensured a consistent supply of slaves to trade with the efreets, without drawing undue attention to the pyromancer's activities.

Adventure Synopsis

The adventure opens with the party's arrival at Bergan's Gap. The fortress is manned by Hazakhul's mercenaries. They claim that a plague still lingers in Starpine Vale, but when the party presses for more answers, one of the pyromancer's lieutenants, Culdred, orders his servants to attack.

Once in the valley, the party encounters the burned ruins of Birch Glen. The pyromancer recently made an example of the village after residents refused his demands. He razed every structure and abducted its entire population as a warning to the other settlements.

Bergan's Mill, the next nearest town, now somberly prepares their offering of slaves. The people are hesitant to discuss their plight, but the town's leader, Timos Bergan the Second, hopes the party can free the valley. Hazakhul's scrying prompts him to teleport henchmen to the town to deliver a lesson of obedience. Bergan the Second asks the party to confront the pyromancer in his lair, a fortress suspended over the maw of the volcano.

The tower's exterior is guarded by an enslaved efreet and other minions, and the party must decide how to access the precariously situated tower. Inside, the upper levels house the pyromancer's allied giants as well as the captives from the valley. The lower levels hold the abandoned quarters of his now-undead minions.

Hazakhul and his apprentices are found in the lowest chamber. He is once again attempting to manipulate the power of the primordial's life energy. When the characters arrive, the pyromancer is all too eager to engage them with the excessive power at his disposal. If the characters are victorious, Hazakhul's defeat weakens the enchantments that suspend the fortress. The characters must escape before they plummet along with it into the heart of the volcano.

Running the Adventure

The adventure begins when the party approaches the fortress of Bergan's Gap, which guards the entrance to Starpine Vale. The bulk of the adventure is location-based, with encounters keyed to the accompanying maps of the valley and Hazakhul's retreat.

Involving the Characters

Starpine Vale is isolated by mountains. The locale can be placed in any mountainous region that is not completely explored. The party could arrive in the vicinity for a number of reasons.

- The ruler of a nearby region sent emissaries to the valley to reestablish contact with the settlements there. Her diplomatic party never returned, and she wants the heroes to determine its fate.
- Scholars are curious about the distant volcano that erupts with abnormal regularity. They believe it might have prophetic significance and hire the characters to lead an expedition there.
- A high priest of a temple friendly to the party sees portents of a dangerous extraplanar force that could disturb the world. His visions point to the valley, but not to the nature of the threat.

Treasure

This adventure has treasure appropriate for 19th-level adventurers. The monetary award is 210,000 gp. The magic items are of levels 20 to 23. You can replace the existing treasure or supplement it as needed for your campaign.

Starpine Vale

The forests and the river access make the valley an ideal logging region. Although several small villages were founded in the valley, Timos Bergan's leadership allowed the communities to develop and prosper. Bergan's Mill grew into a sizable town, and people established additional scattered villages in Starpine Vale.

Five years ago, after Hazakhul captured Bergan's Gap and spread rumors of a plague, outsiders shunned the place. Timos Bergan died soon after agreeing to the pyromancer's bargain. His son, Bergan the Second, took up the mantle of leadership. He struggles to sustain hope among the steadily dwindling population of the valley.

Other Settlements

The map of Starpine Vale shows additional villages not discussed in the course of this adventure. If the party explores them, use Bergan's Mill as a guide for how the residents react to the party.

Unlike the more prosperous town, these villages are depleted by Hazakhul's demands, similar to Birch Glen prior to its destruction. Some villagers hold a great deal of resentment toward Timos Bergan the Second and the bargain his father struck with the pyromancer.

A few residents believe that delivering the party to Hazakhul could lead to favored treatment. In the hopes of saving themselves, they might coordinate an ambush with Hazakhul's giants.

These isolated villages are threatened by Hazakhul if the party attempts to evacuate the valley. Refer to the "Fleeing the Valley" sidebar in area C.

A. Bergan's Gap

When the party approaches Bergan's Gap, read:

Two towers are carved from the stone of the cliffs that meet the banks of the swiftly flowing river. A stone bridge high above links them and straddles a roaring waterfall.

A wooden signpost next to the path is painted with a red skull. In Common it bears the words: "Beware, plague."

Dragonborn mercenaries now hold the towers of Bergan's Gap. They are watched over by Hazakhul's chief apprentice, a flameharrow named Culdred.

The dragonborn were hired by the pyromancer to prevent anyone from leaving the valley or investigating it. They are positioned throughout the towers and observe the party from the arrow slits.

If the party bypasses the tower entirely through stealth or flight, Hazakhul summons Culdred and the two flameborn to his fortress after he learns of the party's presence in Bergan's Mill. They reinforce the wizard's defenses and are encountered in areas D13 and D11.

North of Bergan's Gap, an old logging road winds into the valley and leads to the ruins of Birch Glen (area B).

Culdred

Culdred is Hazakhul's favored apprentice. He oversees the watchtowers when not studying the necromantic arts to further understand and exploit the effects his master's failed ritual had on them. Through his studies he has altered his already unnatural state to become a flameharrow. Culdred inspires terror and obedience in the people of Starpine Vale.

If captured, Culdred would sooner die than offer anything more than fiery threats. In the event Culdred flees from the characters, he is encountered in area D13.

Cultists of Imix

Kaybu and Deltinara are flameborn of Imix, devoted worshipers who have established cults of the Fire Lord in several locations outside Starpine Vale. Fiery visions led them to seek out Hazakhul in an effort to ally with the pyromancer.

The two humans are lovers and their loyalty is to Imix and one another before Hazakhul. They aid in the defense of Bergan's Gap, but they flee the vale if Culdred is slain. If captured, they know only that their visions revealed that Hazakhul can create a bridge between the material plane and the Elemental Chaos. They know nothing of his current plans.

Features of the Towers

Arrow Slits: The arrow slits throughout the tower grant superior cover to those behind them.

Ceilings: Ceilings in the towers are 10 feet high unless otherwise indicated.

Hatches: The hatches between levels in the tower are unsecured unless otherwise noted. They can be barred with a standard action. A barred hatch can be forced open with a DC 23 Strength check.

Light: The towers' interiors are brightly lit by torches unless otherwise noted in the locations below.

A1. Fortress Approach

Combat Encounter Level 19 (12,200 XP)

When the characters approach, or if they attempt to pass the towers, the dragonborn try to warn them off, claiming a dangerous plague is rampant in the valley beyond.

Light: Based on the time of day.

Monsters: Culdred, 2 flameborn, 12 dragonborn slavers.

Read:

The imposing stone towers are dotted with arrow slits and topped with battlements. A portcullis in the western tower blocks the only passage through.

Perception DC 23: *Movement and the gleam of metal are visible at some of the arrow slits.*

Culdred	**Level 20 Elite Controller (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 5,600
HP 374; **Bloodied** 187	**Initiative** +13
AC 34, **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 32, **Will** 34	**Perception** +17
Speed 6	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 15 necrotic, 15 fire; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant	
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1	
Standard Actions	
Claw (fire, necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +25 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 12 fire and necrotic damage, and the target cannot spend healing surges until the end of Culdred's next turn.	
Move Actions	
Dimension Hop (teleportation) ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: Culdred teleports up to 5 squares.	
Minor Actions	
Harrowing Gaze (fear, gaze, psychic) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +23 vs. Will	
Hit: 2d8 + 6 psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of Culdred's next turn and pushed up to 4 squares.	
Deadfire Gaze (fire, necrotic) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)	
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +23 vs. Reflex	
Hit: Ongoing 10 fire and necrotic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends both).	
Str 15 (+12) **Dex** 16 (+13) **Wis** 15 (+12)	
Con 19 (+14) **Int** 23 (+16) **Cha** 26 (+18)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common	

The dragonborn and the towers' other occupants keep watch from the arrow slits in various chambers of the towers. Their starting positions are detailed below.

The moment the watchers see the party, they alert one another in an effort to face the party at once. If the characters gain entry unnoticed, they could potentially fight the defenders in smaller encounters but any noise quickly alerts the mercenaries, the cultists, and Culdred.

2 Flameborns **Level 15 Artillery (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 1,200 each

HP 111; **Bloodied** 55 **Initiative** +8
AC 27, **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 28 **Perception** +11
Speed 6
Resist 10 fire

Traits

Fire Within ✦ Aura 5
Allies within the aura gain resist 5 fire.

Standard Actions

Flail (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +20 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 10 damage.

Fire Bolt (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +20 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + 6 fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).

Blessing of Imix (fire) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Close burst 3 (enemies in the burst); +18 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d6 + 6 fire damage, and the flameborn pushes the target 3 squares.
Effect: Each ally in the burst gains 10 temporary hit points.

Minor Actions

Fiery Eye ✦ At-Will (1/round)
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature taking ongoing fire damage); +20 vs. Will
Hit: The flameborn slides the target 2 squares, and the target grants combat advantage (save ends).

Skills Arcana +15, Intimidate +18
Str 20 (+12) **Dex** 12 (+8) **Wis** 18 (+11)
Con 15 (+9) **Int** 17 (+10) **Cha** 23 (+13)
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Primordial
Equipment flail

If the characters are spotted approaching the tower, one of the dragonborn shouts for them to turn back. The mercenary maintains the ruse of the plague for as long as possible. If the party is insistent or attempts to pass beyond the fortress, he and the other dragonborn attack.

The mercenaries are paid a bonus for captives that Hazakhul can trade to the efreets, so the mercenaries try to take prisoners. If the characters can capture one or more of the dragonborn, they learn that Hazakhul is gathering his latest tribute from the towns to make offerings to extraplanar allies.

12 Dragonborn Slavers **Level 16 Minion Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid XP 350 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +14
AC 32, **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 28 **Perception** +10
Speed 6

Standard Actions

Bastard Sword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 12 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the slaver's next turn.

Crossbow (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +21 vs. AC
Hit: 12 damage.

Minor Actions

Dragon Breath (lightning) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +19 vs. Reflex
Hit: 12 lightning damage, and if the target was marked by the slaver, it is slowed (save ends).

Triggered Actions

Determined Defender ✦ Encounter
Trigger: The slaver drops to 0 hit points.
Effect (Free Action): At the start of the slaver's next turn, it stands up with 1 hit point and without any effects on it.

Str 22 (+14) **Dex** 18 (+12) **Wis** 15 (+10)
Con 13 (+9) **Int** 11 (+8) **Cha** 20 (+13)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Draconic
Equipment scale armor, light shield, bastard sword

Waterfall: The waterfall plunges 20 feet, but creatures that fall beneath the crashing water risk being held under. Each failed swim check beneath the falls causes the character to sink 10 feet. The water beneath the waterfall is 40 feet deep.

Tactics: If combat begins when the party is outside the towers, the dragonborn attack from the arrow slits and move between levels to create the impression of more defenders.

Culdred and the flameborn attack if the party moves within range. Otherwise they remain out of sight until the characters enter the tower. They then move to confront the party together along with any surviving dragonborn slavers.

A2. Gatehouse

A portcullis wide enough for a wagon secures the tower. Beyond it, a steep ramp leads up to a similar portcullis and the valley beyond. Chains crisscross the ceiling and lead to a pair of levers on the eastern wall. A worn wooden ladder ascends to an iron-banded hatch 30 feet overhead.

This gatehouse once regulated traffic in and out of the valley. The steep ramp helped wagons negotiate the difference in elevations. The ceiling here rises to 30 feet.

Two dragonborn slavers stand watch here.

Portcullises: The two levers here operate the portcullises at either end. A closed portcullis can be forced open with a DC 28 Strength check.

A3. West Barracks

A breeze moves between the arrow slits that provide a view of the approaches to the tower. Seven beds with footlockers are positioned along the walls. A large stone spiral staircase rises from the center of the room. A hatch is set in the floor of the southeast corner.

This room is the sleeping quarters for half the dragonborn slavers.

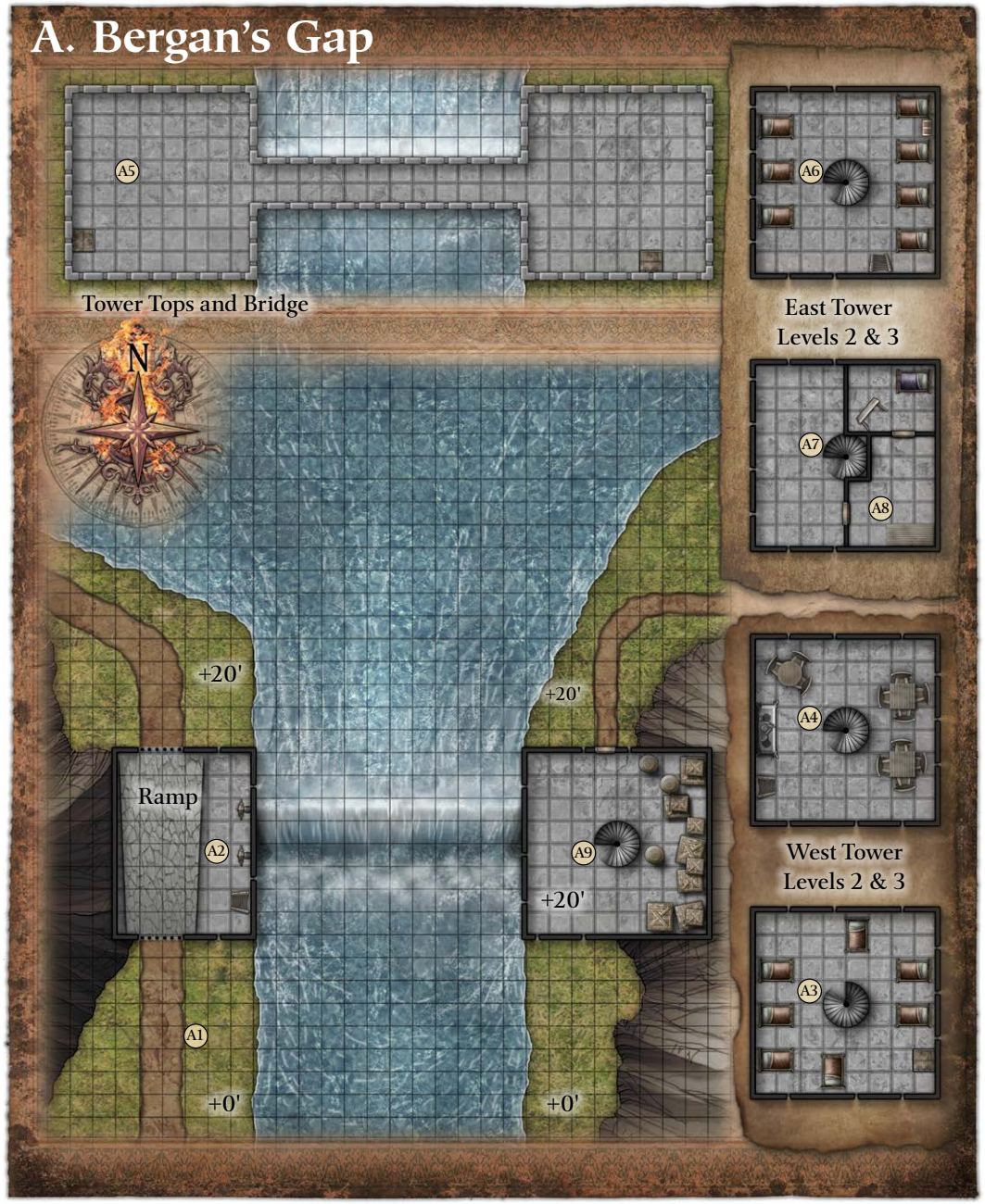
One dragonborn is on watch and wanders between the arrow slits to survey the valley and the approach to the towers.

Treasure: The footlockers contain various personal possessions and 400 gp.

A4. Kitchen

The smell of overcooked food lingers here, and a wood stove stands against the one wall without arrow slits. Tables and chairs are littered with platters, cutlery, cards, and dice.

A ladder provides access to a hatch in the ceiling and a stone staircase spirals down from the center of the room.



When not on guard, the dragonborn spend their time here. The room features tables, chairs, and several dartboards, but nothing of value.

Four dragonborn slavers are here. One keeps watch and three more are engaged in a game of dice at one of the tables.

A5. Rooftops and Bridge

Tall battlements top the walls of the tower roofs as well the stone bridge that links them. A hatch is set into the stonework of each tower.

The drop from the bridge is 60 feet from the southern face of the fort and 40 feet from the northern face.

The hatches here are always kept barred.

Battlements: The towers and bridge are topped with battlements. Creatures behind them receive superior cover.

A6. East Barracks

Two rows of beds are arranged on opposite sides of this chamber. A makeshift altar of black stone sits atop a chest between two of the beds. Burnt offerings smolder there, fanned by the breezes from the arrow slits around the room.

A spiral staircase descends from the center of the room and a wooden ladder leads to a hatch in the ceiling.

This area resembles the west barracks (area A3) and also serves as quarters for the flameborn.

Three dragonborn slavers are posted at the arrow slits here. The two flameborn cultists are concluding a prayer to Imix.

Treasure: The footlockers contain 600 gp among them. Beneath the small altar, a locked and reinforced chest contains the cultists' intended gifts to Hazakhul, if he is successful: 110 pp and a *ring of resourceful wizardry* (*Mordenkainen's Magnificent Emporium*™, page 77) or another suitable level 21 magic item. The lock can be opened with a key carried by

one of the flameborn. Alternatively, a character can pick the lock with a DC 32 Thievery check.

A7. East Tower Guard Post

A fine layer of dark soot clings to the walls, ceiling, and floor of this room and it is redolent with the smell of smoke. A landing for a spiral staircase leads both up and down.

A great many tracks lead between the arrow slits along three walls of the chamber. The tracks from the staircase to the blackened door on the eastern wall are far fewer in number.

Two dragonborn slavers wait here, doing their best to remain quiet and not disturb Culdred unless there is a problem.

A8. Culdred's Abode

An unnatural heat pervades this chamber. A pall of smoke spills from a jeweled brazier and hangs in the air. A blackened workbench is strewn with scorched bones etched with runes. A heap of ashes is mounded against the north wall, undisturbed by the door there.

The main room serves as Culdred's laboratory for experimentation with fire and necromancy. The attached bedchamber has seen no use in decades.

Unless he has been alerted to intruders by the dragonborn, Culdred is here.

Treasure: A large jeweled brazier (9,000 gp) rests on a stand in the laboratory. Beneath his workbench is a secret panel (noticeable with a DC 25 Perception check) that conceals a black diamond and a massive fire opal (5,000 gp each).

A9. Storage Cellar

The thundering of the waterfall outside can be heard through the arrow slits here, and the chamber smells of damp wood. Crates and boxes are heaped against one wall. An iron door to the north is barred by a large piece of timber. A set of stairs spirals up into the tower.

The towers' supplies are stockpiled here: preserved food, additional weapons and bolts, and masonry tools used to maintain the towers.

Exterior Door: The iron door is kept barred but can be forced open with a DC 23 Strength.

B. Birch Glen

As the party nears Birch Glen, read:

The air along the logging road grows thick with the odor of burnt wood. An acrid tang of scorched metal and the thick sooty smell of seared stone accompany the unmistakable hint of roasted flesh.

Birch Glen was surrounded by a thick growth of forest that had been steadily but carefully logged. It prospered until Hazakhul began taking slaves. The villagers struggled to survive for years as the population dwindled. They finally attempted to refuse Hazakhul's most recent demands, with tragic consequences. All those who did not perish were taken as prisoners.

The Ashes of Birch Glen

Exploration Encounter

The party finds the ruins of the village of Birch Glen. After the villagers refused to offer captives to Hazakhul, all that remains is an example of the pyromancer's methods and brutality.

Light: Based on the time of day.

If the party searches the village, read:

A blasted clearing and a scattering of stone foundations are the only indications that a village recently stood here. The husk of an ancient birch tree, scoured by flames, stands amid the tumbled stones of incinerated cottages. Deep gouges in the wood provide a sharp contrast to the ashen trunk.

There are no signs of survivors. Near some homes, several charred corpses clutch scorched weapons. Three more bodies lie near the town's well, clearly an attempted bucket brigade.

Although trees bordering the clearing are scorched, no signs indicate that the fire spread deeper into the forest. A DC 17 Nature check determines that the blaze occurred two to three weeks ago.

If the party searches for the cause of the fire, a DC 17 Nature or Perception check reveals that flames spread from several large hearth fires among the cottages, but that those fires burned far hotter than normal. A further DC 23 Arcana check discerns that the natural fire swelled with an overwhelming amount of elemental energy. If the Arcana check succeeds by more than five, a faded aura of teleportation is also noted.

A DC 17 Perception check locates the remnants of tracks. Giant-sized footprints appear throughout the village in addition to human ones that clearly followed panicked paths during the fire. The giants' trails begin inside the village and, in several cases, inside homes. Refer to "Development" below if the party follows the trail away from Birch Glen.

The Central Tree: The deep gouges in the trunk of the tree are tall letters in the Common script that begin at nearly thrice normal human height and read as follows:

Mark this lesson well, lowlanders. Hazakhul asks little of you. The people of this village sought to refuse what is his right. See what has become of them. Stand against him and you too will be reduced to ashes on the wind.

Lore: Hazakhul uses the same tactics in Bergan's Mill that he employed to raze Birch Glen. He and his minions monitored the village and attacked through the use of his specialized rituals, detailed in the sidebar "Hazakhul's Rituals," below.

Development: A narrow road leads away from the ruins toward Bergan's Mill, and another leads back to the fortress at Bergan's Gap.

A DC 23 Perception check determines that the giant footprints, accompanied by the tracks of numerous humans, depart the village headed westward. The trail skirts Bergan's Mill before leading toward Hazakhul's Retreat.

C. Bergan's Mill

The town of Bergan's Mill is the largest settlement of Starpine Vale. After so many years under Hazakhul's oppression, the people have lost all hope that they can flee the valley or be free of the pyromancer. They react with shock at newcomers and word quickly reaches Timos Bergan the Second.

When the party reaches Bergan's Mill, read:

A stone marker indicates Bergan's Mill is just ahead. The faint whiff of smoke in the air grows steadily, but you eventually see that it billows from a large brushfire on the edge of town where farmers are clearing a plot of land.

Wagons carry loads of felled trees to a mill alongside a narrow creek. A few taverns and inns flank the central street. Well-kept houses with prosperous gardens make up the bulk of the town.

Your appearance attracts odd looks from townsfolk: first furtive glances, but then outright stares and sometimes scowls. Mothers herd children indoors with sharp calls and swatting hands. Several lightly armed militia members furrow their brows and breathe heavy, worried sighs.

Bergan's Mill continues to function like a normal town despite Hazakhul's demands, and the people have accepted his rule. Outlying farms and tiny villages supply food, and Bergan's Mill supports them with its mill and blacksmiths. Only basic supplies are available in the town.

Most folk ask how the characters arrived in the valley. If word spreads that they defeated the defenders at Bergan's Gap, the characters are treated to minor discounts, free drinks, or hopeful smiles, especially if they mention the destruction of Culdred.

The people hesitate to answer questions and speak either in vagaries or feigned ignorance. Troubled by what befell Birch Glen, residents are very concerned that strangers in town could invite similar ruin here. If they are pressed for answers, the townsfolk advise characters to speak to Timos Bergan the Second.

Word on the Street

The people of Bergan's Mill share the following information with little prompting:

- Bergan's Mill is the largest settlement in the valley, but several other small logging villages are scattered through the woods and at the base of the mountains.
- Occasional dangers from the woods are dealt with by the town's militia, under the direction of Timos Bergan the Second. The valley is relatively safe. (Residents leave out the fact that Hazakhul's fire giants abducted the various humanoid tribes as slaves.)
- The Bergan name is highly regarded, and the first Timos Bergan is credited with the development of the valley. His son currently administers the town and is well liked. (Almost all the townsfolk feel that Bergan had no choice but to yield to the pyromancer's demands and they view him as a tragic figure.)

A DC 20 Diplomacy, Insight, or Streetwise check when speaking to residents draws out further information:

- Many townsfolk are missing key family members or are saying good-byes to those around them.
- The people are hesitant to discuss Hazakhul or speak the pyromancer's name. They believe, incorrectly, that it enables him to scry upon them. Everyone is aware that he makes his home in the volcano at the far end of the valley.

Fleeing the Valley

Residents of Bergan's Mill, as well as the other settlements of the vale that are still inhabited, are hesitant to flee the valley. Even if the garrison at Bergan's Gap has been eliminated, people fear that the party cannot protect everyone from Hazakhul's wrath if they were to evacuate. Furthermore, many people still hold out hope for friends and loved ones taken by the pyromancer.

One or two individual families might be persuaded to leave, but most folk instead beg the party to put an end to Hazakhul's reign and search for signs of those who were taken or, at the very least, learn of their fates.

Development

After a short time in town to interact with residents, several members of the militia approach the party. They inform the characters that Timos Bergan the Second wishes to meet with them to discuss developments in the valley. If the party accompanies the militia, proceed to "Breaking the Cycle." Otherwise, the town's leader seeks the party out himself. Adjust the encounter accordingly.

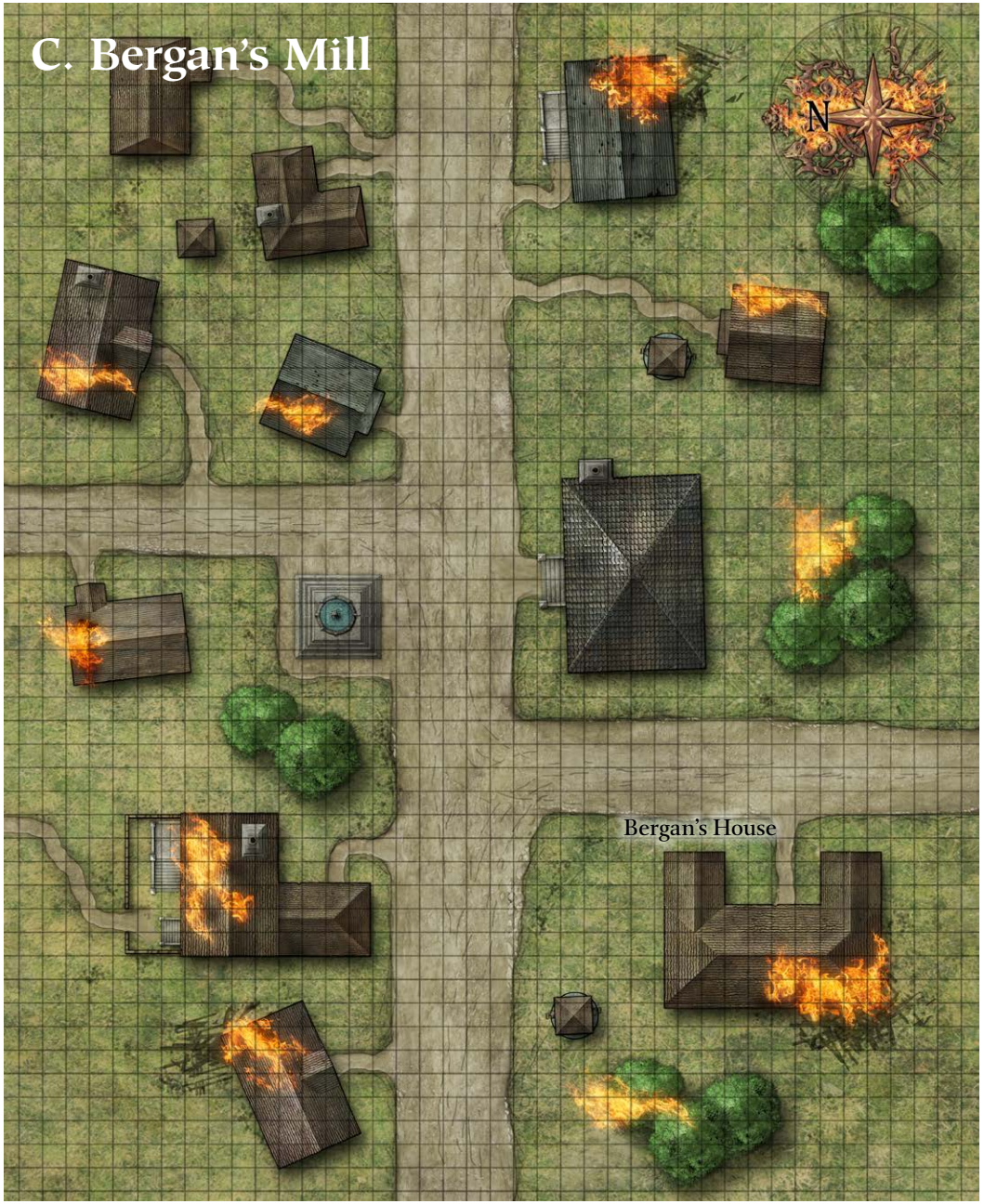
C1. Breaking the Cycle

Roleplaying Encounter

The leader of Bergan's Mill meets with the characters. Despite his fear of Hazakhul, he requests their aid in freeing the valley.

The encounter assumes the party meets with him at his home. Adjust the description if Bergan seeks the characters out in the town.

Light: Bright light from the fireplace.



When the party meets with Timos Bergan the Second, read:

Inside the manor, you are escorted to a well-appointed parlor. Seated beside a crackling hearth, a distinguished man fires an aromatic pipe and drags heavily from it.

His face is marked with the lines that accompany positions of responsibility. His thick hands reveal him to be no stranger to hard work.

"My name is Timos Bergan . . . the Second. I do my best to govern this town and provide protection to our neighbors. I do as my father had once done. Following in his footsteps fills me with pride. And shame."

Timos's lips momentarily press together in a thin line. "My father bowed to a wizard named Hazakhul, sacrificing some of our people so others would be spared. But appeasement only left other families to endure the same. His power prevents resistance. His might prevents escape. Now, your arrival will likely stir him to violence once again. I beg you to stand on our behalf."

Timos is desperate to see the people of Bergan's Mill and the rest of the valley freed, and he wants to erase the mistakes of his father. He is also very concerned that the party's appearance, so soon after the scouring of Birch Glen, might rouse Hazakhul's anger.

The town's leader is willing to recount the history of the valley and use that knowledge to answer any questions the party might have about Hazakhul. Timos knows that Hazakhul arrived and ascended the previously dormant western volcano early during his father's time. Other than a sharp decline in humanoid raiders, the wizard's presence received little notice and he was assumed dead following an immense but brief eruption.

Years later, fire giants claiming fealty to Hazakhul arrived and demanded able-bodied folk from Bergan's Mill and other nearby settlements. All thought of resistance was crushed when the pyromancer made a blazing example of one of the settlements. The demands for tribute continue to this day, and

HAZAKHUL'S RITUALS

Hazakhul uses rituals with slight variations that are suited to his pyromania. Although the specific details are not crucial to the adventure, apply these guidelines.

Burning Eyes functions similarly to View Location, but the focus for the ritual is any well-tended fire. The location viewed is perceived from the nearest open flame. The scrying effort is noticed only by a Perception check with a DC of 15 + the caster's level. The caster can manifest his or her image in the flames and communicate through them.

Blazing Conveyance is similar to Linked Portal, but it does not require a permanent teleportation circle at either end, relying instead on a fire of some kind. Travelers must have resistance or immunity to fire damage to make use of the ritual's effect. Transportation is one-way and only a single creature can emerge from any given fire. Other creatures appear through the next nearest fire, and travelers are often scattered upon their arrival. A creature's arrival is a spectacular event that showers the vicinity with embers and debris.

Hazakhul has increased his demands significantly in the past few months.

Although there hasn't been another cataclysmic eruption, the volcano regularly rumbles and belches ash into the sky not long after the villages and towns offer up their captives. Bergan assumes that Hazakhul performs some terrible ritual of sacrifice. He is certain the pyromancer has a means to spy upon the people of the valley, but he does not know what it is.

MAJOR QUEST: END HAZAKHUL'S TERROR

18th-Level Major Quest (2,000 XP per character)
The party must end Hazakhul's abductions, either through defeating the pyromancer or helping the populace of the valley escape (including the captives from Birch Glen).

Development

As the party's talk with Timos draws to an end, proceed immediately to "A Fiery Rebuke," below.

Even if the characters are hesitant to involve themselves, Hazakhul still orders the fire giant raid. He cannot permit the party to spread word of his actions beyond the valley.

C2. A Fiery Rebuke

Combat and Skill Encounter Level 19 (12,000 XP)

The hearth fire erupts to reveal the image of Hazakhul. He interrupts the town leader's request for assistance from the characters, berates them, and then magically transports henchmen to punish Bergan's Mill. The party must battle the fiery attackers and the fires that threaten to engulf the town.

Light: The outside light is based on the time of day. If it is night, keep in mind that creatures with the fire keyword and any buildings set ablaze shed light.

Monsters: Fire giant, 2 fire giant flamecrushers, conflagration orb.

As the characters conclude their discussion with Timos Bergan the Second, read:

The fire in the hearth erupts in a crackling burst of cinders that sets bits of carpet and nearby furniture smoldering. Tongues of flame form a wrathful visage that stares accusingly at Bergan. Smoke emerges from its mouth along with a voice of blistering anger.

Fire Giant	**Level 18 Soldier**
Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant)	XP 2,000
HP 174; **Bloodied** 87	**Initiative** +11
AC 34, **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 28	**Perception** +14
Speed 8	
Resist 15 fire	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⊕ **Searing Greatsword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +23 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d12 + 13 fire damage.	
Effect: The giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.	
⇳ **Sweeping Sword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Close blast 2 (enemies in the blast); +23 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d12 + 13 fire damage.	
Effect: The giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.	
Str 23 (+15) **Dex** 11 (+9)	**Wis** 10 (+9)
Con 22 (+15) **Int** 10 (+9)	**Cha** 11 (+9)
Alignment evil **Languages** Giant	
Equipment chainmail, greatsword	

"Was Birch Glen not warning enough? Now you gather interlopers to break your father's bargain? So be it! Your town shall be ashes and your people will serve as slaves!"

The flames swell, and the heat grows intolerable. With a rush of air, the fireplace and the wall around it explode, and a flame-wreathed giant stands in their place. His grip tightens on his glowing red maul and his burning gaze makes his intentions clear.

Beyond the gaping hole in the wall, more explosions resound throughout the town. A crimson orb trailing tendrils of flame darts through the air overhead. Rooftop fires and chaos spread in its wake.

After destroying Birch Glen, Hazakhul has used his scrying rituals more frequently to monitor the people of Bergan's Mill, wary of further disobedience. After he observes the party and Bergan, he uses his Blazing Conveyance ritual to send troops to the town. For more on the rituals, see "Hazakhul's Rituals" sidebar.

The giants burst from fireplaces throughout the town. Walls and roofs collapse around them. The

2 Fire Giant Flamecrushers	Level 17 Brute
Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant)	XP 1,600 each
HP 204; **Bloodied** 102	**Initiative** +8
AC 29, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 27	**Perception** +10
Speed 8	
Resist 15 fire	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Searing Maul** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +22 vs. AC	
Hit: 5d8 + 9 fire damage.	
⸸ **Overhead Smash** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +22 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d8 + 14 fire damage, and the target falls prone.	
✧ **Battering Blows** (fire, weapon) ✦ **Recharge** if the power misses every target	
Requirement: The giant must be bloodied.	
Attack: Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); +22 vs. AC	
Hit: 6d8 + 9 fire damage, and the giant pushes the target up to 2 squares.	
Str 27 (+16) **Dex** 11 (+8) **Wis** 14 (+10)	
Con 24 (+15) **Int** 8 (+7) **Cha** 11 (+8)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Giant	
Equipment maul	

conflagration orb erupts from a chimney and sets fire to anything that can burn. Immediately after the creatures arrive, a number of buildings are ablaze. The sudden nature of the attack panics the townsfolk, and it is clear that without some guidance and assistance the entire town could burn to the ground.

To protect the town, the characters must not only defeat Hazakhul's troops, they also need to aid in the firefighting and rescue efforts. The skill challenge below details other actions the characters can take during the course of combat to save the town. This challenge occurs simultaneously with the combat.

Treasure: Each giant carries 5 gems (1,000 gp each).

Tactics: The giants immediately move to engage the heroes. The conflagration orb stays out of reach and uses *scorching bolts* on as many characters as possible before closing in long enough to use *fire tempest* to increase any ongoing damage. The flamecrushers attack characters near the wells and fountain

Conflagration Orb	Level 20 Artillery
Medium elemental animate (fire)	XP 2,800
HP 143; **Bloodied** 71	**Initiative** +17
AC 34, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 35, **Will** 34	**Perception** +13
Speed 6, fly 8 (hover)	
Immune disease; **Resist** 20 fire	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Roiling Flame** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d6 + 6 fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).	
Effect: The conflagration orb shifts 1 square.	
⊛ **Scorching Bolts** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one or two creatures); +25 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d6 + 8 fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).	
✲ **Fire Tempest** (fire) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞	
Effect: The conflagration orb makes the following attack three times, and each burst must have an area of effect that doesn't share any squares with the attack's other bursts.	
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (creatures in the burst); +25 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d6 + 7 fire damage, and if the target has ongoing fire damage, the ongoing damage increases by 5.	
✧ **Waves of Flame** (fire, zone) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied	
Attack: Close burst 3 (creatures in the burst); +23 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d6 + 7 fire damage, and the conflagration orb pushes the target 3 squares.	
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the orb's next turn. The zone is lightly obscured, and any creature that enters the zone or ends its turn there takes 10 fire damage.	
Str 19 (+14) **Dex** 25 (+17) **Wis** 17 (+13)	
Con 17 (+13) **Int** 15 (+12) **Cha** 22 (+16)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Primordial	

to hamper firefighting efforts. The fire giant marks characters that try to attack the conflagration orb.

The Great Bergan's Mill Fire

The party can potentially help the townsfolk bring the fires under control and save a great many lives. The speed of the blazes makes time of the essence. The skill challenge is conducted during the combat encounter but, if it is not successful after 6 rounds of combat, the fire outpaces the party's efforts and rages beyond control.

The skills described here do not represent an exhaustive list. If a player has a creative use for a skill, refer to the descriptions to set an appropriate DC.

Level: 18.

Complexity: 2 (6 successes before 3 failures).

Special: Unless otherwise noted, a check made in this skill challenge is a standard action. Characters might need to be at a specific location to perform certain checks.

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Diplomacy, Heal, Perception, Religion.

Acrobatics (DC 23, two successes maximum): The character performs a daring rescue of someone trapped on the upper floors of a building he or she is adjacent to. If the check succeeds by more than 5, the character may shift up to his or her speed after performing the check.

Athletics (DC 23): A character standing adjacent to a well or the fountain at the town center aids a bucket brigade with a large barrel or an exceptional number of water pails.

Diplomacy (DC 23, three successes maximum): By calming and rallying the townsfolk, the character helps to organize bucket brigades. The character must be within 3 squares of either a well or the fountain. After a successful check is performed at one water source, further checks must be attempted at others. A character may attempt this check using only a minor action but the DC is increased to 32.

Heal (DC 23): A character who is not adjacent to an enemy and who is inside a building that is not burning establishes a triage area and treats the injured.

Perception (DC 23, one success maximum): By locating buckets, pots, and anything else that can hold

water, the character equips more residents for a bucket brigade.

Religion (DC 23, two successes maximum): Through inspiring words, the character can mobilize the hopeless townsfolk who are otherwise prepared to surrender or are in shock and unable to aid their neighbors.

Secondary Skills: Insight, Nature, Thievery.

Insight (DC 23): The character identifies key people among the townsfolk who can assist his or her companions. Add a +2 bonus to the next primary skill check in the challenge.

Nature (DC 23): Assessing the prevailing winds, the character can direct bucket brigades toward the most potentially dangerous spreading fires. The next Athletics or Diplomacy check is made against a DC 17.

Thievery (DC 23): By opening locked doors or jammed windows, the character provides access to trapped residents or useful supplies. Add a +2 bonus to the next Acrobatics, Heal, or Perception check.

Success: If the party succeeds in this skill challenge within 6 turns from the arrival of the town's attackers, the fires are quickly contained. This spares many homes and countless lives. Timos Bergan the Second rewards the party with what remains of his family fortune: 7,000 gp.

Failure: Whether or not the party defeats Hazakhul's troops, the town of Bergan's Mill is a charred ruin. Goods are in short supply and the town will be hard pressed to provide much material assistance to the party.

Development

If the party defeats the giants, the townsfolk offer what assistance they can, based on the results of the skill challenge. Bergan can direct the party to the route that leads to the pyromancer's volcano. When the party sets out, proceed to "Hazakhul's Retreat."

In the event the characters are forced to retreat, the giants round up as many residents of Bergan's Mill as possible and march them toward Hazakhul's lair. Unless the giants are intercepted on their way, the prisoners are added to the captives found in area D9.

If the characters have not already agreed to help the town, when the giants are defeated, Bergan and the other residents beg for their assistance. If they still refuse, refer to the adventure's conclusion regarding the fate of Starpine Vale.

D. Hazakhul's Retreat

The journey from Bergan's Mill to the volcanic peak is 60 miles as the crow flies. Because the fire giants are busy preparing for the latest slave trade, the mountain path leading to the volcano is not guarded. The ominous volcanic rumbles have scared off any potential wandering creatures.

As the characters ascend, they are periodically disturbed in their sleep or knocked from their feet by the tremors.

Nature DC 23: At times, the volcano shows signs of a potential eruption, but then it seems unnaturally brought under control.

When the party reaches the crest of the volcano's mouth, read:

Clouds of smoke and ash billow up from the mouth of the volcano. A fire-blackened block of stone, the size of a large keep, dangles over the volcano's maw suspended by incredibly massive chains. The air around it shimmers and, even at a distance, the searing heat of the volcano is brutal.

Two cables attached to a mechanism of wheels and gears on the inner slope of the crater lead into a ragged hole in one side of what must be the pyromancer's retreat. An occasional puff of smoke belches from the top of the scorched cube.

There are two means to enter the retreat: the hole where the gondolas enter, and the chimney at the top of the retreat. Whether the characters descend on foot or attempt to gain access by flying overhead, there is a chance they are observed by the exterior guards. Refer to area D1.

If the characters bypass the exterior guards and attempt to infiltrate the structure through the rooftop chimney, refer to "The Central Chimney and Hearths," below.

Lore: Hazakhul's retreat originally sat atop the dormant volcano, but his ritual blasted away the peak it sat upon. Through magic, he repositioned and chained it in place above the very heart of the volcano to maximize the power he draws from the fallen primordial's spirit.

When it was first constructed, the retreat was a large, unremarkable cube of stone with no entrances. Hazakhul restricted access to his tower by requiring teleportation to enter. His need for slaves necessitated the gondolas described in area D1.

VOLCANIC CONDITIONS

The descent into a volcano is hazardous for even the most stalwart adventurers. The intense heat and noxious gases can easily overpower the overconfident.

At the start of each day spent in the volcano (and inside Hazakhul's tower, which offers no respite from the heat), the party must succeed on a DC 24 group skill check. Each character may choose to use Endurance, Heal, or Nature for the check. Failure reduces each character's maximum number of healing surges by one. If more than one daily check fails, the losses are cumulative.

Lost surges can be recovered at a rate of one per day spent outside the volcano's crater.

Features of the Retreat

Ceilings: The ceilings throughout the retreat are 20 feet high and flat except in the giants' grand hall. The ceiling there rises to 40 feet high, past the balcony that overlooks it.

Doors: Both the single and double doors throughout the retreat are made of polished stone to withstand the heat of the place, and they are unlocked. They are tall enough to accommodate the fire giants, although a giant must squeeze (*Rules Compendium*™, page 249) through the single doors. Despite their size, they swing easily on their hinges.

Illumination: Unless otherwise noted, areas are brightly illuminated by torches, braziers, and other fires. Although Hazakhul and his undead minions no longer require light, his obsession ensures that fires are present throughout the retreat.

The Central Chimney and Hearths

Two massive hearths on the tower's upper levels keep the tower at the lung-searing temperatures preferred by the fire giants. Furthermore, Hazakhul uses the fires to communicate with the giants and monitor their activities. Both fireplaces are vented through the same chimney. It runs through the center of the tower and to the roof. Characters may attempt to use it to move through the upper levels of the tower and the roof.

The top is secured with a metal grate that may be pried loose with a DC 23 Strength check. A similar grate is between the fourth and fifth level of the tower.

A character who climbs up or down the chimney must succeed in a DC 17 Athletics check. The inside of the chimney is filled with smoke and flame. A character in the chimney takes 10 fire damage per turn and might suffer the effects of suffocation (*Rules Compendium*, page 180).

D1. The Grumbling Guardian

Combat Encounter Level 19 (12,050 XP)

An enslaved efreet called Lhasakald guards and operates the gondola mechanism used to transport the captives who cannot use the Burning Conveyance ritual to enter Hazakhul's retreat. Although bound to the pyromancer, the efreet harbors a deep resentment toward his master and could be bribed.

Perception DC 24: The character hears Lhasakald's grumbles. If he or she understands Primordial, it is clear the efreet is disgruntled at being "cursed to guard duty with dead, useless husks of men."

Light: The volcano's heart sheds dim light.

Monsters: Lhasakald (efreet fireblade), 2 greater fire elementals, and 3 red arcanian apprentices.

When the characters take a closer look at the gondola crossing, read:

The air around a towering, ruddy-skinned figure shimmers with an otherworldly heat. The efreet cleaves a small boulder in two with a red-hot scimitar and then kicks the debris toward the immense chains that hold the pyromancer's retreat aloft. The stones fall short and plummet into the glowing heart of the volcano.

Behind the guardian, a geared wheel supports metal cables that lead into a hole in the stone cube's side. An elongated metal bucket juts from the opening, hanging from the cable, and another is suspended from the cable at the edge of the volcano's mouth.

Perception DC 23: *Two roiling fires of vaguely humanoid shape periodically orbit the dangling fortress.*

In addition to the efreet, a pair of fire elementals and a small group of red arcanian apprentices are tasked with guarding the outside of the retreat. The elementals fly slow circles around the cube and follow the efreets' instructions. The arcanians linger in the retreat where the gondola deposits riders. They typically ignore Lhasakald but respond to his shouts for assistance after 1 round.

If the characters attempt to sneak past the efreet, make a DC 22 group Stealth check. Lhasakald mocks the characters if he observes their approach. He is eager to assert his superiority since Hazakhul's servants typically shun him. He has only disparaging things to say about Hazakhul, and he considers the pyromancer a mere mortal who meddles with forces beyond his control.

Lhasakald is bound by the pyromancer to prevent foes from entering the retreat's walls. Still, the efreet can be bribed to interpret his orders literally. For at least 20,000 gp in gems (or other easily concealed wealth), he ignores the characters' efforts to enter through the roof.

If the characters make cheap offers or insult the efreet, the proud creature attacks and calls upon his allies as described under "Tactics," below.

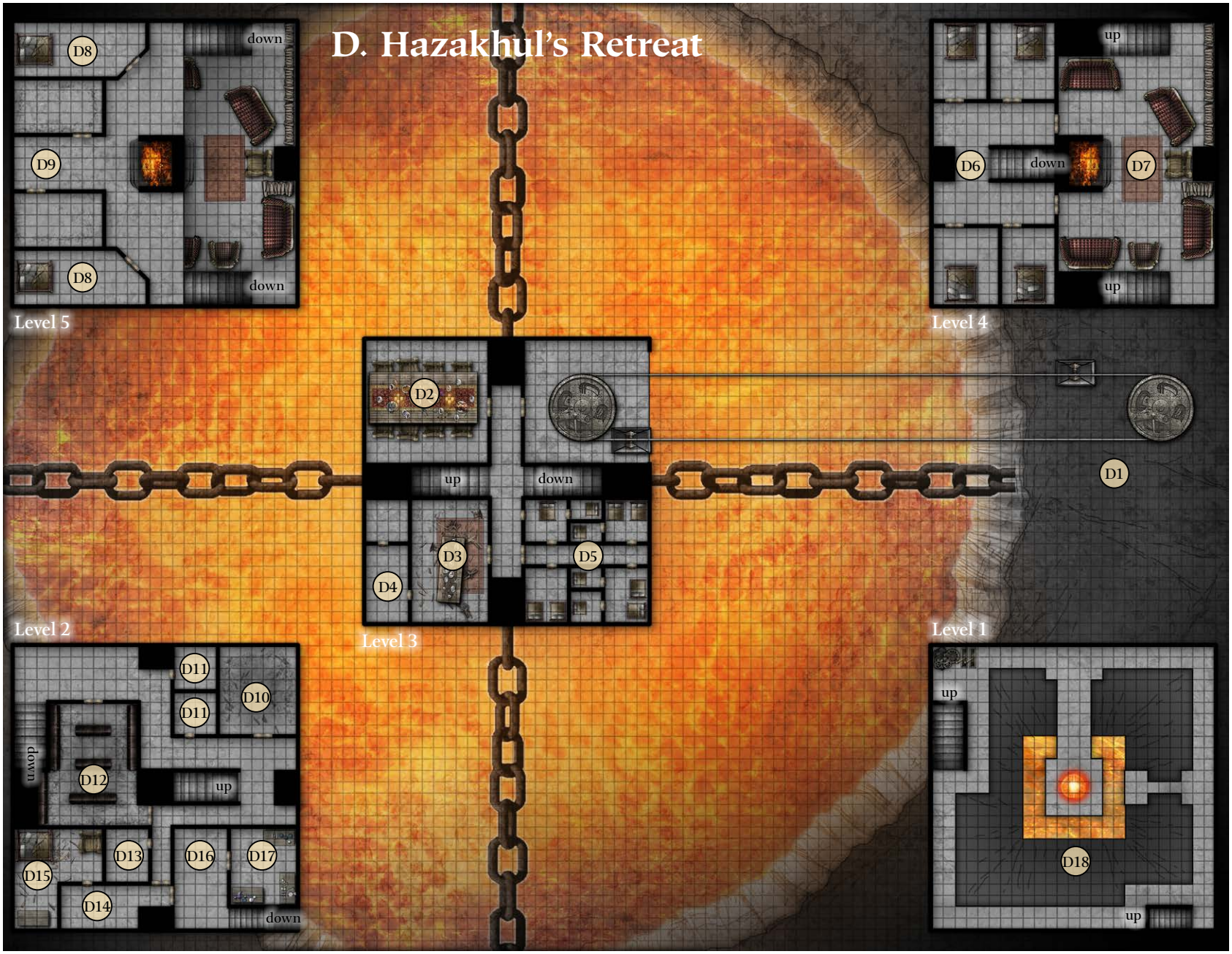
Sounds of combat outside the retreat do not alert the giants within.

Lore: After Hazakhul made contact with the efreets through the portal, they rewarded his good faith offer of slaves with an enslaved efreet of a rival noble house. Lhasakald is extremely bitter over this cruel turn of events. Although compelled by the letter

LONG FALL

The location of Hazakhul's fortress means most falls prove fatal. The drop from the lip of the volcano to the bottom is approximately 300 feet.

Adjust the outcome of falls based on the lethality of your game. A sudden updraft might spare a character some damage, but he or she could just as easily land in a pool of lava.


D. Hazakhul's Retreat
Level 5
D8
down
D9
D8
down
Level 4
up
D6
down
D7
up
D2
up
down
D1
D3
D5
D4
Level 3
Level 2
D11
D10
D11
down
D12
up
D13
D16
D17
D15
D14
down
Level 1
up
D18
up

Efreet Fireblade	Level 22 Soldier
Large elemental humanoid (fire)	XP 4,150
HP 206; **Bloodied** 103	**Initiative** +19
AC 38, **Fortitude** 36, **Reflex** 35, **Will** 33	**Perception** +18
Speed 6, fly 8 (hover)	
Immune fire	

Traits

Blazing Soul (fire) ✦ **Aura** 1
Any enemy that takes ongoing fire damage while in the aura takes 5 extra fire damage.

Frozen Fire
Whenever the efreet takes cold damage, it is slowed until the end of its next turn.

Standard Actions

Scimitar (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +27 vs. AC
Hit: 3d10 + 14 damage.
Effect: The efreet marks the target until the end of the efreet's next turn.

Flying Scimitar (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature or two creatures within 5 squares of each other); +27 vs. AC
Hit: 3d10 + 14 damage.
Effect: The efreet marks each target until the end of the efreet's next turn.

Whirling Firesteel Strike (fire, weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); +27 vs. AC
Hit: 3d10 + 14 damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).

Skills Bluff +20, Insight +18

Str 24 (+18)	**Dex** 22 (+17)	**Wis** 15 (+13)
Con 22 (+17)	**Int** 18 (+15)	**Cha** 18 (+15)

Alignment evil **Languages** Primordial
Equipment scimitar

of his service, the binding does not prevent his efforts to deliberately misinterpret his orders.

Treasure: The efreet wears a brass collar set with rubies (worth 5,000 gp).

Tactics: Lhasakald engages the party on his own at first. He calls for aid from the elementals and the arcanian apprentices if he feels he is outmatched. If he is brought near death, the efreet bargains for his life, offering details of the layout of the tower.

2 Greater Fire Elementals	Level 21 Skirmisher
Large elemental magical beast (fire)	XP 3,200 each
HP 187; **Bloodied** 93	**Initiative** +21
AC 34, **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 34, **Will** 33	**Perception** +11
Speed 12, fly 8	
Vulnerable cold (see *frozen in place*)	

Traits

Frozen in Place
Whenever the greater fire elemental takes cold damage, it cannot shift until the end of its next turn.

Standard Actions

Slam (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +24 vs. Reflex
Hit: Ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends).

Minor Actions

Flickering Flame ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The elemental shifts 6 squares.

Triggered Actions

Hungry Flames (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy attacks the elemental.
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Close burst 3 (enemies in the burst); +24 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + 2 fire damage.

Str 10 (+10)	**Dex** 29 (+19)	**Wis** 13 (+11)
Con 11 (+10)	**Int** 5 (+7)	**Cha** 6 (+8)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** understands Primordial

The Gondolas

The fire giants destroyed the wall of one of the retreat's rooms and constructed the gondolas. They are moved by the cog wheels at either end of the cables.

A creature adjacent to either mechanism can make a DC 17 Strength check (a standard action) to move each gondola 1 square along the cables, but they must move in opposite directions. For every 5 points the creature exceeds the DC, the gondolas move an additional square.

The metal cables that support the gondolas can be severed with a DC 30 Strength check. The cables are independent of each other and each supports one gondola. A gondola attached to a severed cable plunges into the volcano below.

3 Red Arcanian Apprentices	Level 18 Minion Artillery
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 500 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +13
AC 32, **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 30	**Perception** +10
Speed 6	Darkvision
Immune disease, fire, poison	

Standard Actions

Blazing Touch (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. Reflex
Hit: 13 fire damage.

Flamecurse (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +23 vs. Will
Hit: 13 fire damage, and the target gains vulnerable 5 fire (save ends).

Triggered Actions

Fiery End (fire, necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: The arcanian drops to 0 hit points.
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Close burst 3 (creatures in the burst); +21 vs. Reflex
Hit: 13 fire and necrotic damage.

Str 10 (+9)	**Dex** 18 (+13)	**Wis** 13 (+10)
Con 11 (+9)	**Int** 23 (+15)	**Cha** 10 (+9)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Primordial

Across the Chains

The massive chains that anchor the tower in place are reinforced by powerful enchantments cast by Hazakhul to protect them from the volcano's heat. These enchantments also prevent destruction through normal means. A DC 23 Arcana check reveals that the death of the caster breaks the enchantment.

A creature can shimmy across the chains on its hands and feet at half speed with a DC 17 Athletics check. Alternatively, a creature can walk on them and keep its hands free with a DC 25 Acrobatics check. Failure of either check halts the creature's movement on the first square it enters.

Failing either check by more than 5 means the creature falls. Creatures can attempt to catch hold with a successful saving throw. If a creature falls, refer to the "Long Fall" sidebar.

Despite their magical reinforcement, the chains are super-heated. A creature that ends its turn on one takes 10 fire damage.

D2. Giants' Dining Hall

Giant-sized tables and chairs, set with similarly sized platters and utensils, are arranged in this room. Huge shields with fire-themed heraldry adorn the walls.

The giants gather for one meal here each day, but otherwise they eat in the grand hall (area D7).

D3. Humanoid Dining Hall

The tables and chairs of this dining hall are haphazardly scattered throughout the room. The floor is deep with debris, bones, and discarded food. Some of the broken furniture is heaped around a door that clearly sees little use.

Formerly the dining hall for the humanoid minions of Hazakhul, this room is now abandoned. The giants toss their trash in this room but otherwise ignore it.

D4. Kitchen and Pantry

Thick with soot and dust, this kitchen has clearly been abandoned and the stale air smells only of ashes. An open door leads to an equally disused pantry.

This area was abandoned when the pyromancer's apprentices no longer required food, and both the giants and the arcanians have neglected this area. The characters could rest in the small pantry if they enter with stealth and remain quiet.

D5. Abandoned Living Quarters

Silence lingers in this corridor. Four open doors along its length reveal ruined living quarters choked with ashes.

These rooms once housed Hazakhul's many humanoid servants and guards. Now, like the kitchen, they have fallen to ruin.

D6. Lesser Giants' Quarters

Combat Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

These are the shared rooms of the lower-ranking fire giants.

Light: These rooms are brightly illuminated by giant-sized torches in wall sconces.

Monsters: Fire giant flamedancer, fire giant.

Read:

Oversized torches add to the overwhelming heat present at the top of a flight of stairs. Two double doors are on either side of the landing. A pair of corridors lead east to doors carved with depictions of fire giants feasting.

A fire giant and one flamedancer are resting in two of the rooms. They come out to investigate any noises outside their rooms or to respond to shouts for assistance from the grand hall. Sounds of combat here immediately draw the attention of the giants in the grand hall, who warn their companions guarding the prisoners (in area D8 and D9) before investigating.

The four rooms surrounding the staircase landing are some of the giants' quarters. The furniture is iron and their personal affects are goods that can withstand the heat of the tower.

Treasure: In one of the chambers, the characters find 8 rubies (1,000 gp each). In another chamber is a dragon-shaped incense burner with emerald scales (10,000 gp).

Fire Giant Flamedancer	**Level 18 Skirmisher**
Large elemental humanoid (giant)	XP 2,000
HP 174; **Bloodied** 87	**Initiative** +17
AC 32, **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 27	**Perception** +13
Speed 8	
Resist 15 fire	
Traits	
Nimble Reaction	
The flamedancer gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Whirling Spear** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +23 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 8 fire damage, and the flamedancer shifts 2 squares.	
⸸ **Double Attack** ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The flamedancer uses *whirling spear* twice, making each attack against a different target.	
Move Actions	
Flameburst Leap (fire, teleportation) ✦ **Encounter**	
Effect: The flamedancer teleports 8 squares. Any enemy adjacent to the flamedancer at the start of the teleport takes ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).	
Skills Athletics +21, Acrobatics +20	
Str 25 (+16) **Dex** 22 (+15) **Wis** 18 (+13)	
Con 22 (+15) **Int** 12 (+10) **Cha** 15 (+11)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Giant	
Equipment hide armor, spear	

Tactics: Faced with intruders, the giants retreat to area D7 to warn the other giants and then prepare to attack as a group. If prevented from fleeing, they call for aid and stand their ground.

D7. Giants' Grand Hall

Combat Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

If the giants come under attack, they quickly mobilize a coordinated defense and attempt to surround the party here.

Light: This area is brightly illuminated by giant-sized torches in wall sconces and the hearth.

Monsters: 2 fire giants.

Fire Giant	Level 18 Soldier
Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant)	XP 2,000
HP 174; **Bloodied** 87	**Initiative** +11
AC 34, **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 28	**Perception** +14
Speed 8	
Resist 15 fire	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Searing Greatsword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +23 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d12 + 13 fire damage.	
Effect: The giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.	
✧ **Sweeping Sword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Close blast 2 (enemies in the blast); +23 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d12 + 13 fire damage.	
Effect: The giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.	
Str 23 (+15) **Dex** 11 (+9) **Wis** 10 (+9)	
Con 22 (+15) **Int** 10 (+9) **Cha** 11 (+9)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Giant	
Equipment chainmail, greatsword	

Read:
Furniture made of iron and stone and sized for giants is arranged in front of an immense stone hearth. The walls are adorned with battered shields and scorched banners of vanquished foes. Two fire giants sit near the fire and cast smoldering dice across a stone table.

Two sets of stairs flank the room leading to a balcony 20 feet above. Despite the high ceiling, the air is thick with smoke and oppressive heat.

This two-story hall is decorated with shields, weapons, and banners of foes defeated by the fire giant troupe. The giants frequently gather here, since it is one of the hottest chambers in the tower thanks to the immense fireplace. Heaps of firewood line the walls.

The fire giants keep to the upper levels as much as possible. Although loyal due to the pyromancer's promises to share the power of the primordial's spirit, they are uncomfortable with the undead nature of Hazakhul and his apprentices.

Two fire giants are seated at a table here. They react immediately to intruders or noises from adjacent areas.

The hearth and chimney are detailed above.

Treasure: Among the shields on the walls hangs an epic tier *shield of deflection* (*Player's Handbook®*, page 245) or another suitable level 22 magic item. The giants have 90 pp on the table between them.

Tactics: As soon as they are attacked, the fire giants call for assistance, alerting the giants on the level above (areas D8 and D9) and those off the hallway outside (area D6). They attempt to trap the characters in this area and then finish them off with the aid of the other giants. All the giants believe that the primordial witnesses their deeds and therefore refuse to retreat, hoping to prove themselves worthy of its power.

D8. Giants' Quarters

Combat Encounter Level 10 (2,400 XP)

These larger rooms are for the senior members of the fire giant troupe. Currently, the fire giant smokecaller is in the southernmost of the two rooms.

Light: These rooms are brightly illuminated by giant-sized torches in wall sconces.

Monster: Fire giant smokecaller.

Read:
Metal beds and other noncombustible furniture decorate this chamber, along with the giants' personal effects and trophies.

Although larger, these rooms are otherwise similar to the quarters in area D6 and also feature giant-sized iron furniture.

Treasure: A crystalline hookah (15,000 gp) is in the smokecaller's chamber. The smokecaller also carries the key to open the slave pens (see D9).

Tactics: If the smokecaller hears any disturbance outside his chambers, he emerges after 2 rounds. He uses *smokecloud* to envelop as many foes as possible. He then attempts to engage foes in the cloud before using *cindersmoke* so that he can maximize the number of targets in the blast.

2 Fire Giants	Level 18 Soldier
Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant)	XP 2,000 each
HP 174; **Bloodied** 87	**Initiative** +11
AC 34, **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 28	**Perception** +14
Speed 8	
Resist 15 fire	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Searing Greatsword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +23 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d12 + 13 fire damage.	
Effect: The giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.	
✧ **Sweeping Sword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Close blast 2 (enemies in the blast); +23 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d12 + 13 fire damage.	
Effect: The giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.	
Str 23 (+15) **Dex** 11 (+9) **Wis** 10 (+9)	
Con 22 (+15) **Int** 10 (+9) **Cha** 11 (+9)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Giant	
Equipment chainmail, greatsword	

D9. Prisoners' Pens

Roleplaying and Combat Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

Hazakhul's captives from the towns and villages of Starpine Vale are kept here, guarded by the fire giants.

Light: The area outside the cells is brightly illuminated by the hearth. Light spills into the cells and provides dim illumination.

Monsters: Fire giant, fire giant flamedancer.

When the characters look into the pens, read:
Emaciated captives sprawl, unmoving, on the floor of the chambers beyond the barred doors. Only the occasional rise and fall of a prisoner's chest indicates that any of these souls are alive. A half-elf propped against the bars opens his eyes and shifts slightly to look into the corridor outside the cell.

Fire Giant Smokecaller	**Level 19 Lurker**
Large elemental humanoid (giant)	XP 2,400
HP 140; **Bloodied** 70	**Initiative** +18
AC 33, **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 30	**Perception** +13
Speed 10	
Resist 15 fire	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⊕ **Smoldering Whip** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 5 (one creature); +22 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d8 + 10 fire damage, and the smokecaller pulls the target 3 squares.	
⊹ **Cindersmoke** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**	
Requirement: The smokecaller must be within a *smokecloud* zone.	
Attack: Close blast 5 (enemies in the blast); +22 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 3d8 + 8 fire damage.	
Effect: The *smokecloud* zone ends.	
Smokecloud (zone) ✦ **Recharge** when this power ends	
Effect: The smokecaller creates a zone in a close burst 3 that lasts until the end of the smokecaller's next turn. The zone blocks line of sight for all creatures except the smokecaller.	
Skills Acrobatics +19, Stealth +19	
Str 23 (+15) **Dex** 20 (+14) **Wis** 19 (+13)	
Con 20 (+14) **Int** 15 (+11) **Cha** 15 (+11)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Giant	
Equipment chainmail, whip	

A flamedancer lounges by the fireplace here. Another fire giant stands by the doors of the pens and taunts the prisoners.

The giants place little value on the prisoners and treat them accordingly. They collect the people to advance Hazakhul's plan, but they think that they can attack other settlements to replace any slaves that fall victim to the harsh conditions.

If the giants spot intruders or see any signs of an escape, they immediately shout a warning to the smokecaller in area D8 and the giants in area D7.

The crowded rooms that have been converted to hold captives were once additional quarters for the giants. The cells are locked, and the smokecaller carries the key. The characters can also pick the locks with a DC 24 Thievery check. Refer to "The Slave Pens," below.

The hearth and chimney are detailed above.

Treasure: The flamedancer and fire giant carry 3,000 gp each.

Tactics: In addition to shouting for aid (or coming to the assistance of other giants under attack), if the giants sense that the party places value on the prisoners, they use the captives as hostages to force surrender or to buy time to mount a stronger defense.

The Slave Pens

The captives, forty in all, are divided between the two rooms and are permitted virtually no comforts. The oppressive heat has reduced many to exhausted, delusional shells. Although they receive food and water from the giants, the food is charred until it is nearly inedible and the water is almost boiling hot.

Even if given food, it is unlikely that the captives can make the journey to Bergan's Mill without the party's aid. If the characters cleared the defenders from around the gondola chamber, Cincaid (see below) can organize an escape there. If the gondolas have been destroyed, the party needs to find another means to get the captives to safety, since they are in no shape to cross the chains.

Most of the prisoners were captured from Birch Glen, but others were taken from different nearby villages. Rhimner Cincaid, a charismatic half-elf lumberjack from Birch Glen, has become the spokesperson for the prisoners and addresses the party if they are freed.

Rhimner Cincaid

Burly for a half-elf, Rhimner Cincaid clearly favors his human parentage and takes a no-nonsense approach to everything. Rhimner has maintained the hopes of the other prisoners around him. He eagerly offers what assistance he can to spur the party on to defeat Hazakhul.

Cincaid was once escorted to the grand chamber and shown to an efreet merchant as a "sample" of the slaves Hazakhul had to offer. Resourceful and alert, the lumberjack observed as much as he could. He can describe the route (by the central staircase, not through area D16) as well as Hazakhul's hall (area D18).

He does not speak Primordial, but the conversation between Hazakhul and the efreet sometimes switched to Common. Rhimner overheard mentions of a "permanent portal" and discussion of awakening something inside the volcano. He is not certain, but he believes the portal he saw is not something Hazakhul can easily control.

D10. Ritual Room

Charred scraps of firewood are scattered around the room. A black circle of soot scorches the floor and ceiling in the center of this chamber.

This fire-blackened room is used by Hazakhul to create the massive fires needed to perform his Blazing Conveyance rituals.

D11. Guest Chambers

These rooms are relics of a time when Hazakhul invited rival wizards to visit and witness his power.

Light: These rooms are unlit unless occupied by the flameborn (see below), in which case the chambers are brightly lit by torches.

Monsters: If the flameborn from Bergan's Gap were bypassed by the party, they are found here. Otherwise, these rooms are empty.

If the chambers are unoccupied, read:
The thick layer of dust that blankets the floor remains undisturbed. Remnants of a richly appointed chamber have turned to charcoal and ash in this dark, abandoned bedchamber.

If the flameborn are present, read:
A path of human-sized footsteps is visible in the thick layer of dust that blankets the floor here. A flickering torch casts light across a ruined bedchamber that has been tidied as much as possible to make use of the scorched remnants of once-impressive finery.

Fire Giant Flamedancer	Level 18 Skirmisher
Large elemental humanoid (giant)	XP 2,000
HP 174; **Bloodied** 87	**Initiative** +17
AC 32, **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 27	**Perception** +13
Speed 8	
Resist 15 fire	
Traits	
Nimble Reaction	
The flamedancer gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Whirling Spear** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +23 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 8 fire damage, and the flamedancer shifts 2 squares.	
⸸ **Double Attack** ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The flamedancer uses *whirling spear* twice, making each attack against a different target.	
Move Actions	
Flameburst Leap (fire, teleportation) ✦ **Encounter**	
Effect: The flamedancer teleports 8 squares. Any enemy adjacent to the flamedancer at the start of the teleport takes ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).	
Skills Athletics +21, Acrobatics +20	
Str 25 (+16) **Dex** 22 (+15) **Wis** 18 (+13)	
Con 22 (+15) **Int** 12 (+10) **Cha** 15 (+11)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Giant	
Equipment hide armor, spear	

These chambers are occupied by the two flameborn only if the defenders at Bergan's Gap were bypassed. If the cultists fled the party during that encounter, they left the valley since they have no loyalty to Hazakhul.

Treasure: The cultists withheld their intended offerings to Hazakhul after witnessing his unstable demeanor. Their chest from area A6 is here with them.

Tactics: The flameborn flee from intruders to area D18, shouting a warning to Culdred as they run.

Fire Giant	Level 18 Soldier
Large elemental humanoid (fire, giant)	XP 2,000
HP 174; **Bloodied** 87	**Initiative** +11
AC 34, **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 28	**Perception** +14
Speed 8	
Resist 15 fire	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Searing Greatsword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +23 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d12 + 13 fire damage.	
Effect: The giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.	
⊹ **Sweeping Sword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Close blast 2 (enemies in the blast); +23 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d12 + 13 fire damage.	
Effect: The giant marks the target until the end of the giant's next turn.	
Str 23 (+15) **Dex** 11 (+9) **Wis** 10 (+9)	
Con 22 (+15) **Int** 10 (+9) **Cha** 11 (+9)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Giant	
Equipment chainmail, greatsword	

D12. Library

This formerly well-stocked library appears ransacked, and the books are scattered around, some clearly heaped together and burned. Another large door leads out of this chamber.

After his initial failed experiment, Hazakhul directed his rage at what he saw as the flawed works of other wizards and destroyed numerous books and scrolls. Little is to be learned from the blackened pages that remain here.

D13. Culdred's Quarters

This sparsely furnished bedchamber was Culdred's room before he was sent to oversee Bergan's Gap. If he fled from the party in that encounter, he is here.

Light: If Culdred is present, candles provide dim illumination here. Otherwise it is completely dark.

Monsters: This room is empty unless Culdred has not been slain by the party, in which case he is here.

Read:
Grizzly anatomical sketches and necromantic symbols drawn in charcoal adorn the walls. A stack of skulls, mostly humanoid in origin, rests on an otherwise bare workbench beside a small pile of books.

If Culdred is here, add:
A skeleton stands at the workbench. Its eye sockets, filled with one crimson and one ebon gem, blaze with malice.

Culdred took most of his possessions with him to Bergan's Gap. Only insignificant items remain here. If Culdred survived his earlier encounter with the party, or if he was summoned after they bypassed Bergan's Gap, he is here attempting to renew his necromantic studies.

Tactics: Culdred does his best to bypass the party and warn Hazakhul of its presence. He retreats through area D16, knowing that the golems will activate and hopefully delay the party.

D14. Hazakhul's Sitting Room

A path in the dust leads from two sets of double doors and across a ruined sitting room to a single door set in the north wall. The furnishings here are blackened by fire and coated in ash.

This well-furnished room has clearly been abandoned. Like area D11, the once-expensive decorations are charred with the heat of the fortress.

The path across the floor leads to Hazakhul's private bedchamber. If anyone other than Hazakhul opens the door to area D15, the iron golems in area D16 activate and make their way to this area to seek out the intruders.

A DC 24 Thievery check detects this trigger and it can be defeated with a further DC 24 Thievery

check. Even if this trap is defeated, the golems still activate when a creature enters area D16.

D15. Hazakhul's Bedchamber

Candles, torches, and braziers in excess crowd the room. Smears of soot on furnishings and personal effects reveal that this bedroom is still used, despite its ruinous state. The mattress is utterly burned, yet the blankets have clearly been rearranged after the fire. On a bedside table, tea cups are filled with ashy water.

Despite his undead state Hazakhul still carries out the acts of the living, such as mimicking sleep, to quiet his frenzied mind.

Treasure: Hazakhul's wealth is kept in an iron chest. It contains 250 pp, 6 gems (5,000 gp each), and a brass scepter set with diamonds (15,000 gp). Hazakhul has the key, but the lock can be opened with a DC 33 Thievery check.

D16. Hazakhul's Study

Combat Encounter Level 19 (11,200 XP)

The study is protected by a pair of iron golems that immediately attack intruders.

Light: Strange arcane fires and burning braziers provide bright light.

Monsters: 2 iron golems.

Read:

Curiosities of distant lands along with maps and models of otherworldly realms decorate this chamber. A smoking book rests on a writing desk, but its pages do not appear to burn.

Another set of double doors leads out of the room. A red glow spills up from a broad flight of stairs where rhythmic chanting can be heard.

2 Iron Golems — **Level 20 Elite Soldier**
Large natural animate (construct) — XP 5,600 each

HP 386; **Bloodied** 193 — **Initiative** +14
AC 36, **Fortitude** 36, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 28 — **Perception** +10
Speed 6 (cannot shift) — Darkvision
Immune disease, poison
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Traits

☼ **Noxious Fumes** (poison) ✦ **Aura** 2
While the golem is bloodied, any creature that enters the aura or starts its turn there takes 5 poison damage.

Energizing Flames
The first time the golem takes fire damage each turn, it can shift up to 2 squares as a free action, even if it could not normally shift.

Interfering Bolts
When the golem takes lightning damage, it is slowed until the end of its next turn.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Iron Blade** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +25 vs. AC
Hit: 3d10 + 12 damage.
Effect: The golem marks the target (save ends).

⸸ **Cleave** ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The golem uses *iron blade* twice, each time against a different target.

Breath Weapon (poison) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +23 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 4d8 + 9 poison damage, and ongoing 15 poison damage (save ends).

Triggered Actions

⸸ **Dazing Fist** ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: A creature that is within 2 squares of the golem and marked by it moves.
Attack (Immediate Interrupt): Melee 2 (triggering creature); +23 vs. Fortitude
Hit: The target is dazed (save ends).

Toxic Death (poison) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: The golem is first bloodied or drops to 0 hit points.
Attack (No Action): Close burst 3 (each creature in the burst); +23 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d8 + 11 poison damage, and ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).

Str 27 (+18)	**Dex** 15 (+12)	**Wis** 11 (+10)
Con 25 (+17)	**Int** 3 (+6)	**Cha** 3 (+6)

Alignment unaligned — **Languages** –

When the party first encounters one of the golems, read:

An immense metal sculpture of a giant wreathed in stylized flames lumbers forward, a gleaming sword at the ready. A sulphurous odor wafts from the smoky puffs that drift from the nose and mouth of its impassive face.

One of the only lived-in areas of this level, the study is decorated with oddities that Hazakhul collected in his travels before settling here.

The writing desk is heaped with pages of a manifesto of flames. Among them is a journal detailing Hazakhul's dealings with the efreets and his efforts to seize control of the primordial's spirit.

The golems stand immobile here unless someone other than Hazakhul enters this room or area D15. They attack anyone other than the pyromancer.

Treasure: On display is a complex mechanical model of the planes with gems representing the various locales (15,000 gp). A matched pair of golden scimitars set with sapphires (15,000 gp each) hangs on one wall.

Tactics: The iron golems do their best to remain in the midst of their foes to exploit *cleave*. They use their breath weapons whenever possible. They do not retreat and they pursue enemies throughout the tower unless commanded otherwise by Hazakhul.

D17. Hazakhul's Lab

All manner of arcane apparatus sit atop tables and workbenches. Glass jars flicker with captured magical flames and waves of heat occasionally pulse from otherwise ordinary objects.

The pyromancer conducts minor experiments in this lab. Workbenches and various magic implements pack the chamber.

Treasure: On one of the workbenches sits a +4 *flame tongue longsword* (*Mordenkainen's Magnificent Emporium*, page 26) or another suitable level 20 magic item.

D18. Hazakhul's Hall

Combat Encounter Level 22 (20,800 XP)

The pyromancer, accompanied by his apprentices and bodyguards, is preparing to open a conduit to the Elemental Chaos. He intends to draw upon the energy to bind the primordial's power. When the characters arrive, Hazakhul turns that power against them.

Arcana DC 17: A character who observes Hazakhul's ritual immediately realizes the recklessness of it and the danger it poses. See "Playing with Fire," below.

Light: The volcano below and the fiery portal illuminate the area with bright light.

Monsters: Hazakhul, 2 fire giant lavamasters, 4 nabassu gargoyles, 8 red arcanian apprentices.

When the party enters the grand hall, read:

Soot-blackened walls surround this expansive, vaulted chamber. Walkways surround the perimeter of the room and two platforms project toward the middle of the chamber. The floor beneath them slopes down toward metal doors that hang open and reveal the volcano's heart below.

A fire giant stands beside a cog-driven mechanism. Another giant stares down toward the opening, his muscles tight with expectation. Throughout the room, over a half-dozen of the pyromancer's burning, undead attendants chant in unison.

With a wand carved of a single crimson gemstone, Hazakhul tends to a twisting bubble of crackling energy swirling atop a platform at the center of the chamber. The whipping flames within cast flickering shadows across statues of menacing fiends.

A deep rumble from the volcano sends a shudder through the floor. The pyromancer stumbles briefly, and the energies he is manipulating momentarily expand. Despite this loss of control, his scorched lips pull back to reveal a madman's smile. The only life in Hazakhul's eyes seems to be the roiling reflections of the flames that surround him.

Hazakhul is opening a portal to the efreets' domain once again. He intends to channel energy from the portal into the primordial's spirit to awaken it, but he is already using the remains of the spirit's power to maintain the portal. This self-sustaining elemental reaction is unstable to begin with, and the arrival of the party causes a dangerous distraction for the already reckless pyromancer.

Fiery Portal: The portal in the center of the chamber is too unstable to allow creatures to travel through it. It pours powerful energy into the material world. Any creature that enters one of the portal's squares takes 20 fire damage.

The portal can be closed as detailed in "Playing with Fire," below.

Sloped Floor: A fall from the walkways to the sloped floor is only 20 feet, but after the fall creatures slide 2 squares toward the center of the floor.

Treat the steep slope as difficult terrain.

Down the Hatch: A creature unlucky enough to fall through the open hatch can attempt to catch itself with a saving throw. Failure sends it toward the scalding doors of the hatch.

The hatch doors inflict 10 fire damage, but the creature can make another saving throw to catch itself again. A creature that fails to grab hold plunges nearly 300 feet into the heart of the volcano, a fate best not contemplated. (Refer to the "Long Fall" sidebar near area D1.)

Treasure: Hazakhul is never without his *Crimson Wand*. Once removed from the chamber, treat it as a *wand of fire burst* +5 (*Player's Handbook*, page 243).

Lore: The ritual is another attempt at the one that devastated the area and twisted Hazakhul and his apprentices. Originally, he incorporated a "fail-safe" intended to shield their life energies in the event of a mishap, but this hastily researched addendum to the spell instead channeled negative energy into the victims. When triggered, it reanimated them as perpetually burning undead.

Tactics: The pyromancer cannot resist using his powers, and he clearly neglects the ritual as he fights. He employs *mastery of fire* to augment *fell firestorm* and *channel volcanic wrath* whenever possible. Meanwhile, his apprentices continue to chant and focus on the largest threat.

The lavamasters use *magma burst* to stall melee foes and *magma lash* to yank enemies off walkways.

The nabassu gargoyles remain in *stone form* until the party members approach close enough to ambush. Then they take to the air and focus on ranged opponents. When bloodied, the gargoyles move toward a lavamaster's aura. If Hazakhul is slain, the gargoyles attempt to flee immediately.

The pyromancer and his apprentices fight to the death, as do the fire giants. Refer to "Out of the Frying Pan" for more on the consequences of Hazakhul's death.

Playing with Fire

Hazakhul's ritual gathers the primordial-fueled fury of the volcano and attempts to channel it into an ongoing portal between the material world and the Elemental Chaos. That portal siphons the chaotic energy to awaken the primordial spark beneath the volcano.

The chanting of the apprentices contains the furious energy and allows Hazakhul some control over it. It also augments the *Crimson Wand's channel volcanic wrath*.

Hazakhul **Level 20 Elite Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 5,600

HP 298; **Bloodied** 149 **Initiative** +15
AC 34, **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 34, **Will** 32 **Perception** +13
Speed 6
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 20 necrotic, 20 fire
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Standard Actions

Soulsearing Touch (fire, necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d10 + 18 fire and necrotic damage.

Soulsear (fire, implement, necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +25 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d10 + 8 fire and necrotic damage, and ongoing 10 fire and necrotic damage (save ends).

Fell Firestorm (fire, implement) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Area burst 2 within 20 (creatures in the burst); +25 vs. Reflex
Hit: 5d8 + 8 fire damage.
Miss: Half damage.

Minor Actions

Burning Hands (fire, implement) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +23 vs. Reflex
Hit: 5d4 + 8 fire damage, and the target is pushed up to 3 squares.

Mastery of Fire ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Special: The portal to the Elemental Chaos must still be present.
Effect: Hazakhul's attacks with the implement keyword deal 2 extra fire damage for each red arcanian apprentice in the chamber.

Triggered Actions

Smoldering Curse (fire, necrotic) ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: Hazakhul is first bloodied.
Attack: Close burst 5 (enemies in the burst); +23 vs. Will
Hit: 2d10 + 8 fire and necrotic damage, and the target gains vulnerable 10 fire (save ends).

Skills Arcana +23, Religion +23
Str 14 (+12) **Dex** 21 (+15) **Wis** 16 (+13)
Con 23 (+16) **Int** 26 (+18) **Cha** 23 (+16)
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant, Primordial
Equipment *Crimson Wand*

The defeat of his apprentices reduces Hazakhul's power, but it also reduces his control. When four or fewer arcanians remain, fiery energy from the portal lashes all creatures in the chamber. These bursts inflict 10 fire damage at the start of each of Hazakhul's turns unless the metal hatches have been sealed.

To seal the chamber from the volcano and the ritual's power source, creatures must operate the massive cogs that control the hatch. An adjacent creature can make a DC 22 Strength check to open or close one of the four hatch doors. One other adjacent creature can assist in the check.

When all four doors are closed, the arcanians can no longer augment Hazakhul's powers, and the portal implodes and disappears. The portal does not reappear if any of the hatches are reopened.

As long as the portal remains open and the wielder remains in the grand hall, the possessor of Hazakhul's *Crimson Wand* can make an attack with the following profile.

Standard Action

Volcanic Wrath (fire, implement) ✦ **Recharge** ⚅ ⚄ ⚃
Attack: Area burst 2 within 20 (creatures in the burst); Intelligence vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d8 + 9 fire damage, and the target falls prone.
Miss: Half damage.

If a character seizes his wand, Hazakhul orders his followers to concentrate their attacks and recover it.

Out of the Frying Pan

When Hazakhul is slain, the volcano rumbles ominously and the entire suspended fortress trembles and bucks beneath the characters' feet. The enchantment that reinforced the chains against the volcano's heat dissipates. The chains begin to deform and weaken, and it's clear that the entire place will soon plunge into

2 Fire Giant Lavamasters **Level 17 Controller (Leader)**
Large elemental humanoid (giant) XP 1,600 each

HP 164; **Bloodied** 82 **Initiative** +12
AC 31, **Fortitude** 31, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 28 **Perception** +13
Speed 8
Resist 15 fire

Traits

☼ **Hearthflames** (fire, healing) ✦ **Aura** 2
Any enemy that enters the aura or ends its turn there takes 10 fire damage. Any bloodied ally of the lavamaster that starts its turn within the aura regains 10 hit points.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Molten Sword** (fire, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +22 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 4 fire damage.

↷ **Magma Lash** (fire) ✦ **Recharge** when no creature is grabbed by the lavamaster
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +20 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d8 + 10 fire damage, and the lavamaster pulls the target 4 squares. If the target ends the pull adjacent to the lavamaster, the lavamaster grabs it.

✲ **Magma Burst** (fire, zone) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +20 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d6 + 10 fire damage.
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the lavamaster's next turn. The zone is difficult terrain. Any enemy that enters the zone or ends its turn there takes 10 fire damage.

Triggered Actions

↟ **Fiery Vendetta** ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy grabbed by the lavamaster attacks it.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The lavamaster or one of its allies can make a melee basic attack against the triggering enemy as a free action.

Str 24 (+15) **Dex** 19 (+12) **Wis** 21 (+13)
Con 20 (+13) **Int** 15 (+10) **Cha** 16 (+11)
Alignment evil **Languages** Giant
Equipment chainmail, greatsword

the volcano. If the uncontrolled swaying of the tower does not alert the heroes to the danger, a successful DC 17 Arcana or Dungeoneering check does.

4 Nabassu Gargoyles **Level 18 Lurker**
Medium elemental humanoid (earth) XP 2,000 each

HP 131; **Bloodied** 65 **Initiative** +18
AC 32, **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 28 **Perception** +14
Speed 6, fly 8 Darkvision

Traits

☼ **Bloodfire** (fire, necrotic) ✦ **Aura** 3
While the gargoyle is affected by *stone form*, whenever any enemy ends its turn in the aura, the gargoyle gains 10 temporary hit points and the enemy takes 10 fire and necrotic damage.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Claw** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 7 damage.

↟ **Abyssal Bite** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. AC
Hit: 2d12 + 8 damage.

Stone Form (fire, necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The gargoyle gains tremorsense 10 and resist 35 to all damage until it uses a minor action to end this effect. When the gargoyle ends this effect, each enemy within 3 squares of it takes 2d10 + 10 fire and necrotic damage.

Skills Stealth +19
Str 25 (+16) **Dex** 21 (+14) **Wis** 21 (+14)
Con 17 (+12) **Int** 5 (+6) **Cha** 18 (+13)
Alignment evil **Languages** Primordial

The easiest means of escape is flight, either through an open hatch in the floor, teleportation, or by the gondola mechanism.

The gondolas are a risky proposition, since the cables are yanked about by the bobbing fortress. Unless they secure themselves, creatures must make a saving throw each turn or be pitched over the side of the gondola. Over the side, they receive a second saving throw to catch hold, otherwise they face a long fall into the volcano (see the "Long Fall" sidebar near area D1).

Creatures can also scale the chains back to the lip of the volcano, but the peril of the situation can be increased if the chain snaps and the swings down against the side of the volcano. Creatures are

8 Red Arcanian Apprentices **Level 18 Minion Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 500 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +13
AC 32, **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 31, **Will** 30 **Perception** +10
Speed 6 Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 fire

Standard Actions

⊕ **Blazing Touch** (fire) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. Reflex
Hit: 13 fire damage.

↷ **Flamecurse** (fire) ✦ At-Will
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +23 vs. Will
Hit: 13 fire damage, and the target gains vulnerable 5 fire (save ends).

Triggered Actions

↟ **Fiery End** (fire, necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: The creature is reduced to 0 hit points.
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Close burst 3 (creatures in the burst); +21 vs. Reflex
Hit: 13 fire and necrotic damage.

Str 10 (+9) **Dex** 18 (+13) **Wis** 13 (+10)
Con 11 (+9) **Int** 23 (+15) **Cha** 10 (+9)
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Primordial

then forced to make the rest of the climb vertically, increasing the DC to 23.

The timing of the collapse is left up to the DM. The event is intended to add drama rather than annihilate the characters. If they have not yet rescued the captives from the giants in the upper level of the tower, the precarious situation can take longer to unfold. The unsteady movement of the floor can impose a -2 penalty to all attack rolls, cause all terrain to be treated as difficult, or both.

Concluding the Adventure

The presence of the life spark of the fallen primordial remains a potent draw for others that seek to harness its power. Rituals to open portals to the Elemental Chaos performed within the volcano are empowered by the energy there. Reduce the DC by 5 for any such

ritual and reduce any material costs by half. The party might use this location to mount an attack on the efreet stronghold and attempt to recover the captives Hazakhul traded away.

The volcano might draw other fiery creatures seeking to lair there and exploit the fallen primordial for their own ends. The characters can attempt to undertake a quest to extinguish the primordial spark to prevent its misuse. The cultists of Imix encountered at Bergan's Gap, for instance, might foreshadow a larger interest in the region.

If the heroes fail to stop Hazakhul, the harnessed energy of the primordial renders the portal to the Elemental Chaos permanent. Thanks to his mastery over the primordial's energy, the pyromancer now has control over the efreets, who are quite shocked by this unforeseen development. He uses his newly acquired soldiers to terrorize the countryside beyond the valley and fortifies his stronghold.

Alternatively, Hazakhul's inability to control the fiery energy destroys him as a massive planar rift opens in the material world. The entire valley is consumed by the Elemental Chaos and spills forth countless creatures bent on destruction. The efreets exploit this passage and organize massive slave-taking operations that overshadow even Hazakhul's most draconian measures.

About the Author

John "Ross" Rossomangno spends his days hunched over the keyboard, posting varied ramblings to his website, BrokenBinding.com.

Massacre at Misty River

A D&D adventure for characters of levels 7-9

By Stacey Janssen

Illustration by Ralph Horsley

Cartography by Jared Blando

Long ago, a goblin king named Mulamak ruled a vast tract of wilderness east of Misty River. His rule was short and bloody. Mulamak made too many enemies, and these foes eventually found his secret lair and slaughtered both king and tribe.

Decades later, a nomadic halfling clan seeking shelter from a storm happened upon Mulamak's old cave, wherein they found piles of goblin bones and a few hidden caches of loot. The halflings fashioned weapons from the bones, took the treasure, and moved on. One prize they never found, though, was Mulamak's crown, which had tumbled into a fissure.

Natalia, a ranger from the village of Skyglade, heard legends of the old goblin cave and decided to explore it. She gathered a few companions, found the cave, crawled down into the fissure, and discovered the rusty iron crown. Unknown to her, the goblin king's spirit was trapped within it, and when Natalia touched the crown, Mulamak's spirit exerted its will on her.

On the way back to Skyglade, Natalia came to loathe any moment she wasn't touching the crown. She even cradled it under her arm as she slept. During the trip, her companions noticed a significant change in the ranger's demeanor. She grew more domineering, harsh, and abusive. By then Mulamak's spirit, which still resided within the crown, had possessed her.

Upon her return to Skyglade, Natalia moved into an abandoned tower about a mile east of the village. She lived in seclusion there for months, eventually returning to the village with a pack of worgs at her command. She ordered the residents to clear the trees between the village and the tower so she could keep an eye on them, and those who refused were fed to the worgs. The beasts now patrol the woods around Skyglade, and the villagers are prisoners in their homes, unable to leave Skyglade without Natalia's consent. They subsist on water and garden vegetables, and they aren't allowed to hunt or forage.

Sequestered in her new lair, Natalia has been calling in some of the goblin king's old debts. Using animal messengers, she recruited a wizard named Truanon to create a summoning circle in the tower, and then she used the circle to call forth a grell philosopher that owed Mulamak a favor. She also tracked down a gnoll chieftain, demanding that he send a pack of gnolls to Skyglade to help keep the villagers in line and patrol the surrounding woods.

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The possessed ranger's next order of business was to exact revenge on the halfling clan who had disturbed the bones of the goblin tribe and stolen its loot. She took her worgs hunting for the culprits and finally came upon a halfling encampment on the bank of Misty River. The worgs ripped the tents to shreds to get the fresh halfling meat within while Natalia stood back and shot arrows at anyone who fled the scene, including a young halfling boy named Bradford.

After the massacre, Natalia and the worgs returned to Skyglade. Meanwhile, Bradford lingers on as a ghost. Believing that he alone survived the massacre, he hides in the branches of a tree, afraid to come down and return to the site of the attack.

Adventure Synopsis

The characters start in Riverfolly, a village upriver from the massacre site. How they arrive is up to you, but consider having them stop there for a brief rest between adventures. During their stay, they hear a report about a terrible massacre along the shores of Misty River and decide to investigate.

When the characters arrive at the scene, they find the camp in shambles, with dead halflings and blood everywhere. They also meet a young halfling boy named Bradford—evidently the only survivor—who claims that he escaped by hiding under the roots of a tree. The characters can try to take him back to Riverfolly or to the nearby village of Skyglade, where Bradford's uncle (and only surviving relative) lives. The boy cannot move more than a few hundred feet away from the massacre site—a clue to his true nature. If the characters find and bury Bradford's remains, they can lay his spirit to rest. He asks that they visit his uncle in Skyglade and let him know what's happened.

The characters arrive at Skyglade to discover worgs patrolling the perimeter and gnolls guarding the front gate. After fighting their way in, they learn the village's plight. Speaking with Natalia's former companions, the characters learn that she began acting strangely after exploring an old goblin cave and retrieving a rusted crown.

The villagers ask the characters to free them from Natalia's tyranny, preferably without killing the ranger. They also warn the characters that her tower is overrun with strange monsters. After the adventurers make it to the tower, they fight their way up to Natalia and either kill or incapacitate her. Once separated from Mulamak's crown, she regains her senses and sees to it that the crown is destroyed.

Adventure Hooks

Shortly after the adventurers arrive in the village of Riverfolly, the mayor sends a messenger to fetch them.

When the characters meet the mayor, read:
"I've just received word of a horrific scene downriver, reported by a halfling traveler. The scene she described—blood, corpses, ripped tents and clothing—sounded awful. I need you to look into this for me. It may foreshadow a threat to Riverfolly."

The meeting with the mayor triggers a minor quest.

Minor Quest: Investigate the Massacre Site

8th-Level Minor Quest (150 XP per character)
The mayor of Riverfolly wants the characters to examine the massacre site, find out who or what was behind the attack, and discern if there is any immediate danger to Riverfolly.

The Massacre Site

The adventurers follow the Misty River south to the site of the massacre (marked X on the map).

Light: Bright (sunlight) during the day, dim (moonlight) at night.

When the party approaches the clearing, read:
On the east bank of the Misty River, you see a foggy clearing littered with halfling remains. Closer inspection reveals that several corpses have been torn to shreds, while others have arrows in them. Tents, clothing, and other bits of fabric lie in ripped pieces as well.

The characters find twenty dead halflings (of all ages) in the clearing. If they search the surrounding woods, allow each character involved in the search to make a DC 17 Nature check or Perception check to find another body that's been either torn to shreds or shot with an arrow. One randomly determined character also stumbles upon Bradford (see "Creature" below), who is hiding in the boughs of a tree about 60 feet from the clearing.

The arrows have black fletching (crow feathers) but are otherwise ordinary. A character who makes a DC 24 Nature check finds another clue to the archer's identity: a few bootprints 30 feet east of the clearing. Based on the shape and depth of the prints, they were most likely made by a Medium female (possibly a human, half-elf, or elf).

A DC 12 Nature check confirms that most of the halflings were slain by dire wolves or worgs, as evidenced by the wounds and abundant tracks.

Creature: Bradford, the halfling boy, hides in the boughs of an old oak tree. Although he appears to be corporeal, he is a ghost, but Bradford doesn't realize that he is dead. He thinks he survived the massacre by hiding in the cavity under the exposed roots of the tree. A character within 15 feet of the tree can make a DC 17 Perception check to notice the hollow cavity, and investigation of the space reveals Bradford's small, maggot-ridden corpse with an arrow stuck in its chest. Any character who rolls a 22 or higher on the Perception check spots the halfling boy hiding in the tree's branches. If he goes unnoticed, Bradford shouts, "Be careful!" as one or more characters

approach the tree. Wide-eyed and fearful, he whispers, "Worgs!"

If convinced that the area is safe, Bradford climbs down from the tree but is too focused on the adventurers to notice his own dead body hidden underneath it.

Bradford relays the following information:

- His clan was camped by the river when the worgs attacked in the middle of the night.
- Someone told him to flee into the woods and hide, which he did. He took refuge under the old oak tree.
- He remembers a lot of screaming, the snarls of worgs, and an eerie silhouette in the moonlit fog. The silhouette appeared to be that of a tall woman with a bow. (By "tall," Bradford means human-sized.)
- As far as he knows, there were no other survivors. He hasn't seen or heard any other halflings since the attack and is too frightened to travel far from the river on his own.
- Bradford has an uncle named Corbin who lives in Skyglade, a walled village farther east. Bradford knows how to get to Skyglade and wants to tell his uncle what happened, but he is too scared to travel the woods alone.

Although Bradford looks real, he isn't. He can interact with people and objects as though he were real. For example, if he complains that he is hungry (as all halflings do) and the characters give him something to eat, he can hold the food and even consume it. One thing Bradford cannot do is move more than 100 feet from his remains; he merely stands at the edge of that distance, unable to go farther (which confuses him). If he is somehow forced beyond this point, he disappears and reappears in a random location within 100 feet of his corpse.

Bradford's ghost has speed 25, defenses 15, 1 hit point, and no effective attacks. When reduced to 0 hit points, he disappears and reforms 1d6 rounds later in the place where he vanished. The only way to get rid of the ghost is to bury Bradford's remains.

Given the boy's innocence, the characters are likely to realize that Bradford is a ghost before he does. After they find his remains, they can bury his body and lay his spirit to rest. (A successful DC 12 Religion check confirms that the ghost's tether to the living world isn't particularly strong, so the simple act of burial should be enough to send Bradford's spirit to the afterlife.) Alternatively, the characters can deliver the corpse to Bradford's uncle in Skyglade, in which case the ghost can accompany them as long as the body isn't placed in an extradimensional space, such as a *bag of holding*.

After Bradford realizes that he is a ghost, he greets the news with a mixture of emotions. At first he's glum, but then glee takes hold as he discovers that he can run through trees. In time, he grows weary of the afterlife, and if he lingers in the world too long, he becomes angry and menacing. Characters who find it entertaining to have a halfling ghost in their midst should eventually realize that Bradford's spirit needs to be put to rest.

Trees: A character who makes a DC 10 Athletics check can climb a typical tree in the forest up to about 30 feet.

Treasure: If the characters try to loot the dead halflings, they find nothing worth taking. Possessed by the greedy goblin king, Natalia already claimed everything of value, leaving behind broken weapons and worthless trinkets.

Minor Quest: Speak to Uncle Corbin

8th-Level Minor Quest (150 XP per character)
Bradford asks the characters to take him to his uncle Corbin in Skyglade. After the characters realize that the boy is a ghost, they can complete this quest by delivering his remains to Corbin for proper burial, or they can bury Bradford themselves, travel to Skyglade, and inform Corbin what has happened.

The Village of Skyglade

Skyglade is about five miles southeast of the massacre site. Originally a lumberjack outpost, it grew into a full-fledged settlement twenty years ago when the lumberjacks started relocating their families to the area. It currently has about 200 residents. Most of the villagers are human, but there are also a few dwarves, elves, half-elves, halflings, and half-orcs.

If the characters stick to forest trails, the hike from the massacre site to Skyglade is seven miles. If they cut through the forest, it takes them just as long to reach the village because they travel more slowly.

Approaching the Village

Combat Encounter Level 6 (1,400 XP per patrol)

Surrounding the village is a 15-foot-high wooden palisade, and set into the western wall is a gatehouse with a pair of sturdy (but unlocked) wooden gates.

Creatures: Two gnoll gorgers and two worgs stand guard outside the western gatehouse. Four patrols—each one also consisting of two gnoll gorgers and two worgs—circle the village in a clockwise direction. These patrols are spaced equidistant around the perimeter of the palisade.

Front Gates: If the characters approach the front gates, the gnoll gorgers and worgs stationed outside attack. They are savage creatures and do not negotiate with strangers.

Climbing the Wall: If the characters try to climb over the surrounding wall, they must first make a group Stealth check to avoid being seen by a patrol. (See the *Rules Compendium*™, page 128, for rules on

group checks.) If the patrols have been wiped out, no group Stealth check is required. Scaling the palisade wall without climbing gear requires a successful DC 20 Athletics check.

Reinforcements: If the characters get into a fight outside the village, the noise of battle has a 1-in-6 chance per round of attracting a patrol, which emerges from the surrounding forest and joins the fray. After all the patrols have joined the battle, no more patrols can be summoned.

10 Gnoll Gorgers	**Level 7 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 300 each
HP 96; **Bloodied** 48	**Initiative** +6
AC 19, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 18	**Perception** +3
Speed 7	Low-light vision
Traits	
Pack Attack	
The gnoll's attacks deal 5 extra damage to any enemy that has two or more of the gnoll's allies adjacent to it.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Bite** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d6 + 8 damage, or 3d6 + 10 while the gnoll is bloodied.	
Minor Actions	
Gorge (healing) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)	
Effect: Melee 1 (one ally). The target takes 5 damage, and the gnoll regains 5 hit points.	
Skills Intimidate +11, Stealth +11	
Str 20 (+8) **Dex** 17 (+6) **Wis** 11 (+3)	
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 9 (+2) **Cha** 17 (+6)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common	
Equipment leather armor	

10 Worgs	Level 9 Brute
Large natural magical beast	XP 400 each
HP 120; **Bloodied** 60	**Initiative** +7
AC 21, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 20	**Perception** +9
Speed 8	Darkvision
Traits	
☼ **Frightful Growl** (fear) ✦ **At-Will**	
Each enemy in the aura takes a -1 penalty to attack rolls, and each ally in the aura gains a +1 power bonus to attack rolls.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Bite** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d6 + 5 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).	
Skills Stealth +12	
Str 21 (+9) **Dex** 17 (+7) **Wis** 10 (+4)	
Con 20 (+9) **Int** 7 (+2) **Cha** 16 (+7)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal	

Inside the Village

Roleplaying Encounter

The gnolls and worgs that patrol the perimeter have strict orders not to enter the village unless they are attacked from within. Thus, for the time being, the villagers are safe—albeit prisoners in their homes.

Whenever Mulamak threatens villagers directly, he feels Natalia's will resisting him. He fears that slaughtering the villagers might strengthen the ranger's resolve and cause him to lose control of her.

The residents carry on as best they can, but they are afraid. They don't know what Natalia plans to do with them, and they know nothing about the massacre at Misty River. If the characters speak to the villagers, they learn the following.

- Skyglade's troubles began when Natalia and her companions returned from exploring an old goblin cave to the north.
- Natalia found a relic in the caves: a rusted crown. The explorers found little of value.
- By the time the explorers returned to Skyglade, Natalia was a different person: bossy, vulgar, and condescending. She soon left the village and took up residence in an abandoned tower east of Skyglade.
- The old tower was built by a kindly old wizard who died many years ago. After his apprentices moved out, the tower was bequeathed to a brawny, disagreeable half-orc named Old Red, who made a small fortune as an adventurer and later served the realm as a public executioner. Five years ago, Old Red rode away on his fly-ridden mule, and no one has seen him since.
- Natalia ordered the villagers to clear the trees between Skyglade and her tower so she could "keep an eye on things."

After the characters speak to the villagers, they gain the following new quest.

Major Quest: Save Skyglade

8th-Level Major Quest (350 XP per character)
The villagers ask the party to free Skyglade from Natalia's tyranny. The characters can fulfill this quest by wresting Mulamak's crown from Natalia's clutches and destroying it. After the crown is destroyed, the goblin's evil spirit is banished forever.

Uncle Corbin

One of several villagers who greet the adventurers is Bradford's uncle Corbin, a halfling cobbler. He has been worried about some family members he was expecting, fearing that the worgs might attack them as they approached the village. He is horribly distraught to learn the fate of his clan and even more troubled by Bradford's death. If the boy's ghost travels with the party and his remains, Corbin is confused to see his nephew in the company of strangers—until the sad truth is revealed to him.

If the ghost has not yet been laid to rest, Corbin sees that the task is done. He buries the remains in a plot behind his cottage.

Completed Quest: Sharing news of Bradford's fate with Corbin completes the "Speak to Uncle Corbin" minor quest.

Natalia's Companions

If the characters ask to speak with Natalia's companions, they are directed to the following individuals.

- Glamel (22-year-old female half-elf) is a headstrong warrior who spends a lot of time drinking at the Raincross Tavern. She was nearly killed trying to liberate the village from Natalia's tyranny. Mardan (see below) stabilized the dying half-elf and tended to her wounds.
- Iovis (27-year-old male human) is a quiet, superstitious lumberjack who hates going into the woods alone. He puts on a brave front but is terrified of monsters and things that go bump in the night. When he was a young boy, he and some friends explored the old tower until a noise startled him and he fled. He knows the tower's layout well, but not its contents.
- Mardan (21-year-old male human) is a brave priest of Avandra who tends to the sick. He has had a secret crush on Natalia for years and believes that she is possessed (though he does not know by what). Natalia's worgs would have killed Glamel had the ranger not called them off, suggesting to Mardan that Natalia can yet be saved.
- Sasha (25-year-old female human) is the eldest daughter of the village innkeeper. A plain-looking young woman, she has been friends with Natalia since they were children. After they left the old goblin cave, Sasha was the first to notice that something was wrong with Natalia, and she is convinced that the rusty crown in her possession has something to do with her friend's transformation.

Natalia's companions are eager to see her return to normal, but they won't abandon their fellow villagers and risk incurring her wrath by leaving. They urge the characters to end the threat to Skyglade without killing their friend.

Old Goblin Cave

If the player characters decide to visit the old goblin cave north of Skyglade, the villagers can provide directions. The journey to the cave is uneventful.

As the characters approach the cave, read:
The trees part to reveal a great hill, carved into the base of which is a yawning cave.

The 20-foot-wide, 20-foot-high cave goes straight into the mountain for about 30 feet before widening into a 40-foot-wide, 100-foot-deep antechamber. Natural arches lead to several smaller side chambers. Characters searching the complex find bits of broken armor, a few broken weapons, and scattered goblin bones, but nothing of value. Rotted sticks once used as torches line the walls of the antechamber, but they can no longer hold a flame.

At the back of the antechamber, a natural fissure has formed in the wall and floor. The fissure is barely 3 feet wide and about 10 feet deep. This crevice is where Natalia found Mulamak's rusty crown.

After the characters finish exploring the cave, they can resume the adventure. If the players crave combat, you can stage an encounter as the party exits the cave. Either roll on the table below, or choose whichever encounter you prefer. Statistics for all monsters in the table can be found in *Monster Vault*™.

EXITING THE CAVE

d6	Encounter	Level (XP)
1	4 dire stirges	6 (1,200 XP)
2	3 gnoll blood callers and 6 war hyenas	6 (1,278 XP)
3	4 ogre mercenaries	7 (1,400 XP)
4	4 ambush drakes and 2 ogres	7 (1,500 XP)
5	1 young red dragon	7 (1,500 XP)
6	1 human transmuter, 2 human duelists, and 10 human thugs*	8 (1,750 XP)

** These humans are bandits in search of a new lair.*

Natalia's Tower

The adventure culminates with an attack on Natalia's tower, which contains plenty of surprises.

Shortly after laying claim to the tower, the possessed ranger called on a wizard ally named Truanon to create a summoning circle on the second floor, which she used to summon a grell philosopher. The grell brought along the goblin king's old scrying orb, which Natalia now uses to watch over the village of Skyglade and its inhabitants. Mulamak's spirit knows that something is amiss and has placed the tower guards on alert.

When the characters approach the tower, read:
The 60-foot-tall stone tower has four stories, with iron spikes circling the spire between floors. Part of the pitched roof has collapsed, leaving a gaping hole over the southwestern corner.

Leaded glass windows are set into the top floor, which is wider than the floors below it. None of the lower floors has windows.

The front door is located on the north side of the tower and is made of old, rotted wood reinforced with new steel bands and a sturdy lock.

The lock on the front door requires a successful DC 23 Thievery check to pick. A character can also break down the door with a successful DC 20 Strength check.

Scaling the Tower: The tower walls are made of mortared stone and require a DC 20 Athletics check to climb. Characters who scale the walls cannot reach the fourth floor without climbing gear because it protrudes outward on all sides.

1. Torture Chamber

Combat Encounter Level 7 (1,500 XP, including the gnolls in area 2)

Old Red, the tower's previous resident, was an executioner by trade. The half-orc collected a sordid array of torture devices, which he displayed here to terrify unwanted visitors. He never used them on anyone.

Light: Dim (weak torches).

Read:
Sputtering torches illuminate a variety of ghastly torture devices arranged about this windowless room. The stonework is old, damp, and mossy. In the middle of the room stand two hungry gnolls.

A stone staircase leads up to area 2.

Creatures: Two gnoll demon spawn stand guard here. They rush forward as soon as the characters throw open the front doors, and their hyenalike cackling is loud enough to alert the gnoll far fangs in area 2, which come downstairs and join the fray on the following round. All four gnolls revel in slaughter and fight until killed.

Treasure: One gnoll carries a pouch containing 120 gp. The other wears a gem-inlaid bronze bracer (worth 250 gp) on one wrist.

2 Gnoll Demon Spawn	Level 9 Brute
Large natural humanoid	XP 900 each
HP 120; **Bloodied** 60	**Initiative** +7
AC 21, **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 20	**Perception** +6
Speed 8	Low-light vision
Traits	
Pack Attack	
The gnoll's attacks deal 5 extra damage to any enemy that has two or more of the gnoll's allies adjacent to it.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Claws** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +14 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d10 + 5 damage.	
Minor Actions	
⊕ **Hungry Bite** ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)	
Requirement: The gnoll must be bloodied.	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +14 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 6 damage, and the gnoll gains 5 temporary hit points.	
Str 22 (+10) **Dex** 17 (+7) **Wis** 15 (+6)	
Con 20 (+9) **Int** 8 (+3) **Cha** 6 (+2)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common	

2. Old Library

Exploration Encounter or Combat Encounter (see area 1)

The wizard who built the tower used this room as a library, but his apprentices removed its valuable tomes after their master passed away. The tower's next owner, Old Red, used the room for storage.

Read:
Three moldy bookcases stand against walls that were once plastered. Much of the plaster has peeled away, and you see evidence of scratch marks.

The gnolls have scratched away the plaster on the walls, looking for secret compartments (but finding none). The room holds nothing of value.

A stone staircase leads down to area 1.

2 Gnoll Far Fangs	Level 8 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid	XP 350 each
HP 68; **Bloodied** 34	**Initiative** +9
AC 22, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 19	**Perception** +11
Speed 8	Low-light vision
Traits	
Pack Attack	
The gnoll's attacks deal 5 extra damage to any enemy that has two or more of the gnoll's allies adjacent to it.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Handaxe** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 7 damage, or 2d6 + 9 while the gnoll is bloodied.	
➳ **Fang Bow** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 30 (one or two creatures); +15 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d10 + 5 damage, or 2d10 + 7 while the gnoll is bloodied.	
✣ **Hungry Arrows** (weapon) ✦ **Encounter**	
Attack: Area burst 2 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +15 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d10 + 5 damage, or 2d10 + 7 while the gnoll is bloodied. The target takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends).	
Skills Stealth +14	
Str 17 (+7) **Dex** 21 (+9) **Wis** 15 (+6)	
Con 14 (+6) **Int** 9 (+3) **Cha** 7 (+2)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common	
Equipment leather armor, handaxe, fang bow (longbow)	

Creatures: Two gnoll far fangs linger here. If they hear combat in area 1, they investigate (see that area for details).

3. Summoning Circle

Exploration Encounter or Combat Encounter Level 10 (2,000 XP)

A wizard who owed Mulamak a favor created a magical summoning circle here, which Natalia used to bring the creature currently inhabiting area 5.

Light: Dark.

Beholder **Level 9 Solo Artillery**
Large aberrant magical beast XP 2,000

HP 392; **Bloodied** 196 **Initiative** +9
AC 23, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 22 **Perception** +11
Speed 0, fly 4 (hover) All-around vision, darkvision
Saving Throws +5; **Action Points** 2

Traits

All-Around Vision
Enemies can't gain combat advantage by flanking the beholder.

Standard Actions

Bite ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); 14 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 8 damage.

Eye Rays ✦ At-Will
Effect: The beholder uses two of the following eye rays, using each against a different target. This attack does not provoke opportunity attacks.
1. *Charm Ray* (charm): Ranged 10; +14 vs. Will; the target is dominated until the end of its next turn.
2. *Wounding Ray* (necrotic): Ranged 10; +14 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 6 necrotic damage.
3. *Sleep Ray* (charm): Ranged 10; +14 vs. Will; the target is immobilized (save ends).
   First Failed Saving Throw: The target is knocked unconscious instead of immobilized (save ends).
4. *Telekinesis Ray*: Ranged 10; +14 vs. Fortitude; the beholder slides the target up to 4 squares.
5. *Slowing Ray* (necrotic): Ranged 10; +14 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).
6. *Brilliant Ray* (radiant): Ranged 10; +14 vs. Will; 1d6 + 5 radiant damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).
7. *Terror Ray* (fear, psychic): Ranged 10; +14 vs. Will; 2d8 + 5 psychic damage, and the beholder pushes the target its speed.
8. *Petrifying Ray*: Ranged 10; +14 vs. Fortitude; the target is petrified (save ends).
   Aftereffect: The target is immobilized (save ends).
9. *Death Ray* (necrotic): Ranged 10; +14 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 10 necrotic damage. If the target is bloodied before or after the attack, it is also dazed (save ends).
   First Failed Saving Throw: The target is dazed and weakened (save ends both).
   Second Failed Saving Throw: The target dies.
10. *Disintegrate Ray*: Ranged 10; +14 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 5 damage, and ongoing 10 damage (save ends).

Eye Ray Frenzy ✦ Recharge ⚅
Requirement: The beholder must be bloodied.
Effect: As *eye rays* above, except the beholder makes three eye ray attacks.

Minor Actions

Central Eye ✦ At-Will (1/round)
Attack: Close blast 5 (enemies in the blast); +12 vs. Will
Hit: The target cannot use encounter or daily attack powers until the end of its next turn.

Triggered Actions

Random Eye Ray ✦ At-Will
Trigger: The beholder is conscious and an enemy starts its turn within 5 squares of it.
Effect (No Action): The beholder uses one random eye ray against the triggering enemy.

Str 18 (+8) **Dex** 20 (+9) **Wis** 15 (+6)
Con 18 (+8) **Int** 19 (+8) **Cha** 20 (+9)
Alignment evil **Languages** Deep Speech

Read:
A summoning circle has been drawn on the floor in the northeast corner of this room, and it appears to be of recent construction. Five unlit candles surround it. The room's other furnishings—a desk, a chair, and a couple of barren shelves—are in much poorer condition.

A stone staircase leads up to area 4. The furniture in the room is unremarkable.

Candles and Summoning Circle: A successful DC 16 Arcana check reveals that the candles empower the summoning circle. If all five candles are lit, a creature standing adjacent to the circle can activate it with a successful DC 23 Arcana check (standard action). The circle does not function if one or more candles are unlit or taken from the room.

The summoning circle can be defaced (a standard action) to render it permanently inoperable.

Creature: The first time a character activates the summoning circle, an enraged beholder appears above it. The first chance it gets, the beholder disintegrates the summoning circle, freeing it from captivity and leaving a roughly circular hole in the floor (leading down to area 1). It then attacks its summoner and any other creatures it sees.

Clever characters might try to parley with the beholder. The creature is supremely arrogant, though, and it listens only if the characters offer it at least 2,000 gp worth of treasure or agree to be its minions. Even then, the party must succeed at a DC 17 group Diplomacy check to win the beholder's allegiance, which lasts only until the end of the adventure.

When the beholder is first bloodied, it attempts to flee by the most expeditious route, using its power of disintegration to make holes in the walls, if necessary.

4. Workroom

Exploration Encounter

This chamber once served as a wizard's workroom. Later, Old Red used it as an armory.

Light: None.

Read:
Two battered lanterns hang from the ceiling by iron chains, but they are unlit. The room has a faint chemical scent as well as furnishings to suggest that it might have served as a wizard's workroom. One large table has fallen onto its side, and another stands in the corner, covered in grime.

A stone staircase leads down to area 3.

Perception DC 23: A hidden trapdoor is faintly visible in the ceiling.

Trapdoor: A wooden trapdoor is set into the ceiling at the north end of the room. The trapdoor's underside is painted to look like stone, making it hard to discern from the rest of the ceiling.

Characters can reach the trapdoor by stacking the two tables and climbing onto them. The trapdoor pushes open into area 7 above.

5. Scrying Orb

Combat Encounter Level 6 (1,200 XP)

Natalia comes here to spy on the villagers of Skyglade.

Light: None.

Read:

A crystal ball rests atop an iron-wrought pedestal in the middle of this 15-foot-square room. The walls are covered in peeling plaster painted with faded sylvan scenes.

The woodland scenes on the walls include painted images of fey creatures, which become apparent only when the murals are studied closely.

Perception DC 30: A creature floats above the door inside the room. It resembles a giant brain with a nest of tentacles trailing below it.

Creature: A grell philosopher floats above whichever door the characters open first and waits for someone to pass underneath, at which point it attacks. Natalia used the summoning circle in area 3 to bring the grell to the tower. It is very intelligent and attempts to flee when first bloodied.

Scrying Orb: This glass orb is 10 inches in diameter, weighs 5 pounds, and has defenses 10 and 1 hit point. Touching the orb causes it to shed light as bright as a candle for as long as the contact persists. A creature that touches the orb while envisioning a familiar location can see the location reflected in the orb. The orb captures sights and sounds in a 20-foot-radius for up to 1 minute before going dark for 1 hour, after which it can be used again. Creatures in the observed area with a passive Perception score of 22 or higher can sense that they are being watched. Spells and rituals cannot be used through the scrying orb.

Each time the orb is used, there is a 1-in-6 chance that the scryer is teleported to the location being spied on (without the scrying orb). Because the orb was created for Mulamak, the teleportation property does not apply to him or his host.

Grell Philosopher **Level 11 Elite Controller**
Medium aberrant magical beast (blind) XP 1,200

HP 224; **Bloodied** 112 **Initiative** +10
AC 25, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23 **Perception** +12
Speed 1 (clumsy), fly 6 (hover) Blindsight 12
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Standard Actions

Tentacle Rake (poison) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +16 vs. AC
Hit: 3d8 + 6 damage, and the target is slowed and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends both).

Lightning Lance (lightning) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +14 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + 3 lightning damage, and the target is blinded.

Venomous Mind (psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Close burst 3 (enemies in the burst); +14 vs. Will
Hit: 2d8 + 5 psychic damage, and when the target makes a melee attack, it must choose its target at random from all potential targets in range (save ends).

Psychic Storm (psychic, zone) ✦ **Recharge** ⚅
Attack: Area burst 2 within 10 (creatures in the burst); +14 vs. Will
Hit: 3d8 + 3 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the encounter. Any creature that ends its turn in the zone is dazed until the end of its next turn.

Skills Arcana +13, Stealth +20

Str 14 (+7)	**Dex** 21 (+10)	**Wis** 14 (+7)
Con 16 (+8)	**Int** 16 (+8)	**Cha** 13 (+6)

Alignment evil **Languages** Deep Speech

6. Empty Room

Exploration Encounter

This small room contains nothing of interest. The stone staircase leading to area 7 is strewn with old, dead leaves.

7. Natalia's Den

Combat Encounter Level 10 (2,600 XP)

Natalia dwells here when she isn't out hunting or using the scrying orb (see area 5). Characters hoping to catch the ranger alone and off guard will be disappointed.

Light: Bright (sunlight) or dim (moonlight).

Read:

The top floor of the tower is one large, open space with windows of leaded glass facing north, south, east, and west. Old furnishings are strewn about the floor, along with dead leaves blown in through a gaping hole in the southwest corner of the roof.

Two griffons crouch next to a disheveled bed, while a giant snake is coiled against the northwest corner behind an overturned table. A dark-haired woman in leather armor stands in the northeast corner of the room, aims a black-feathered arrow in your direction, and asks, "Who are you?" Secured to her belt is a small, rusty crown, and by her side is a black, snarling worg with bloodshot eyes.

The possessed Natalia spends most of her time talking to herself and plotting. Occasionally she ventures downstairs and uses the scrying orb in area 5 to see what her "subjects" (the villagers of Skyglade) are up to.

Creatures: While possessed by Mulamak's spirit, Natalia retains her skills and abilities as a ranger and has used *befriend beast* to secure the loyalty of a mated pair of griffons and one crushgrip constrictor. She also keeps a worg named Vilesnarl. The griffons come and go through the hole in the roof. The first time

Natalia is bloodied, she attempts to mount the nearest griffon and escape (with the crown, of course).

Natalia is willing to parley with interlopers before disposing of them. Here's how she responds to certain questions when asked:

- *Why the massacre at Misty River?* "Those halflings had it coming."
- *What do you mean by that?* "They stole my treasures and despoiled my previous lair!"
- *Where's your lair?* "A great cave to the north."
- *Are you Natalia?* "I am now."
- *What have you done to Natalia?* "Made her stronger. Together, we will reclaim my kingdom!"
- *Who are you, really?* "Mulamak, the Great and Terrible! Mightiest of the Goblin Kings! Ruler of the Woodland Realm! Slayer of Halflings!"

Crown: The goblin king's rusty crown has defenses 5 and 10 hit points; however, it cannot be attacked while in Natalia's possession. A character can attempt to steal the crown from her belt. Removing it requires a successful DC 23 Thievery check (standard action), and if the check succeeds, Mulamak's spirit makes the following attack against the would-be thief.

Triggered Action
Ghostly Possession ✦ Encounter
Trigger: A humanoid creature takes the crown into its possession.
Attack: Melee 1 (the triggering creature); +14 vs. Will
Hit: Mulamak's spirit takes control of the triggering creature until the crown is no longer in its possession. The triggering creature's alignment becomes evil.
Miss: 2d10 + 15 psychic damage.
Effect: The creature previously possessed by Mulamak is no longer under Mulamak's control, and it regains its normal alignment.

Trapdoor: A wooden trapdoor in the floor can be spotted with a successful DC 16 Perception check. The trapdoor must be pulled open; the floor of area 4 lies 15 feet below.

Treasure: A wooden chest near the bed is locked (DC 19 Thievery check to unlock). Natalia keeps the key in her desk drawer. The chest contains treasure taken from the halflings massacred on the banks of Misty River: 270 gp, an *elixir of climbing* (level 6), an *elixir of water breathing* (level 8), a pouch containing four +2 *shiver-strike sling stones* (*Mordenkainen's Magnificent Emporium*™, page 37), and a pair of *boots of leaping* (*Mordenkainen's Magnificent Emporium*, page 63).

Windows: A nonflying creature pushed through a window falls 50 feet, takes 5d10 damage, and lands prone 10 feet from the tower's base.

Development

If Mulamak's hold over Natalia is broken, the ranger does everything in her power to destroy the crown and end the threat of the goblin king's spirit. The crown's destruction is the only way to rid the world of Mulamak forever.

If the possessed Natalia flees astride a griffon, she circles the tower once, laughing and gloating, "Soon the whole world will fear the name Mulamak!" If the characters fail to prevent her escape, she finds a new lair far from Skyglade and begins to rebuild the goblin king's power base, perhaps calling in a few more favors.

If Mulamak possesses one of the player characters, you can either take control of the character or invite the player to continue running the character as a villain.

Completed Quest: Destroying Mulamak's crown completes the "Save Skyglade" quest.

Natalia **Level 11 Elite Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 1,200
HP 174; **Bloodied** 87 **Initiative** +10
AC 25, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23 **Perception** +12
Speed 6
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1

Standard Actions
⊕ **Short Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +16 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 12 damage.

➢ **Longbow** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +19 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 8 damage.

Double Attack ✦ At-Will
Effect: Natalia uses *short sword* twice or *longbow* twice.

Befriend Beast ✦ At-Will
Effect: One beast within 5 squares of Natalia that has an Intelligence of 3 or lower considers her an ally and obeys her commands until released from service, until she damages it with an attack, or until Natalia is slain. Natalia can befriend beasts only of her level or lower, and no more than three beasts at any one time.

Skills Athletics +13, Nature +11, Stealth +15
Str 16 (+8) **Dex** 21 (+10) **Wis** 15 (+7)
Con 15 (+7) **Int** 13 (+6) **Cha** 18 (+9)
Alignment good **Languages** Common
Equipment leather armor, short sword, longbow, 30 arrows, rusty goblin crown

Crushgrip Constrictor	Level 9 Soldier
Large natural beast (reptile)	XP 400
HP 96; **Bloodied** 48	**Initiative** +9
AC 25, **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 20	**Perception** +12
Speed 6, climb 6, swim 6	Low-light vision
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Bite** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d10 + 6 damage, and the constrictor grabs the target (escape DC 17).	
ǂ **Constrict** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature grabbed by the constrictor); +12 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 2d12 + 8 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the constrictor's next turn.	
Skills Stealth +12	
Str 22 (+10) **Dex** 16 (+7) **Wis** 17 (+7)	
Con 16 (+7) **Int** 2 (+0) **Cha** 10 (+4)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

2 Griffons	Level 7 Brute
Large natural beast (mount)	XP 300 each
HP 98; **Bloodied** 49	**Initiative** +6
AC 19, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 17	**Perception** +9
Speed 6, fly 10	
Immune fear (while bloodied)	
Traits	
Blood Frenzy	
While bloodied, the griffon can take an additional move action each turn and takes a -2 penalty to all defenses.	
Rabid Charger (mount)	
When the griffon's rider charges, the griffon can use *claws* twice as a free action after the rider's melee basic attack.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Claws** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC (+14 vs. AC while bloodied)	
Hit: 2d6 + 10 damage.	
Str 20 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 12 (+4)	
Con 18 (+7) **Int** 2 (-1) **Cha** 6 (+1)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

Worg	Level 9 Brute
Large natural magical beast	XP 400
HP 120; **Bloodied** 60	**Initiative** +7
AC 21, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 20	**Perception** +9
Speed 8	Darkvision
Traits	
☼ **Frightful Growl** (fear) ✦ **At-Will**	
Each enemy in the aura takes a -1 penalty to attack rolls, and each ally in the aura gains a +1 power bonus to attack rolls.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Bite** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d6 + 5 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).	
Skills Stealth +12	
Str 21 (+9) **Dex** 17 (+7) **Wis** 10 (+4)	
Con 20 (+9) **Int** 7 (+2) **Cha** 16 (+7)	
Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal	

Concluding the Adventure

If Mulamak's spirit is banished and Natalia survives, the ranger is heartbroken at the destruction she has caused. Unless the player characters strongly urge her to return to Skyglade, Natalia is too ridden with guilt to face her fellow villagers and instead disappears into the forest. She might return to Skyglade months or years later, or not at all. The characters might encounter her again during a future adventure in which she gladly repays the favor owed them.

If characters keep the goblin king's crown, it could prove troublesome in the future. Although the crown has no value, weak-willed humanoids are strangely drawn to it, and Mulamak's spirit seizes every opportunity to possess the crown's current owner.

When the adventurers are finished in Skyglade, they can head back to Riverfolly and collect their reward before moving on to their next adventure.

Completed Quest: If the characters return to Riverfolly and report what has transpired, they complete the "Investigate the Massacre Site" quest.

About the Author

Stacey Janssen writes video games by day and has recently published *Fanatic: A TERA Short Story* to the Kindle. She also juggles.

The Sun Never Rises

A D&D adventure for 4-6 pregenerated 1st-level characters

By Shawn Merwin

Illustrations by Beth Trott, Chippy, Chris Seaman, William O'Connor, Tyler Jacobson, Howard Lyon, and Emrah Elmasli

Cartography by Jason A. Engle

Beneath the settlement of Dagger Falls, the deadly vanguard of an evil army crawls from the Underdark to threaten those who revere the light. *The Sun Never Rises* is a Dungeons & Dragons® adventure for four to six players. This adventure uses pregenerated characters whose backgrounds link directly to its story, and the adventure originally served as a tie-in to the *Web of the Spider Queen* D&D® Encounters™ season. You can find these pregenerated characters online at the Dungeon 216 table of contents.

Adventure Background

In advance of a larger invasion of the Dalelands, a strike team serving drow House Jaelre has tunneled beneath the Temple of Lathander's Light in Dagger Falls. Her Radiance Dareen Travaskyr, the human priestess who leads this temple dedicated to the sun deity, Amaunator, has been intent on creating a holy symbol of great power. To form this object, which she calls the *visage of Lathander*, she needs a handful of rare rubies. (The exact number of rubies the priestess requires matches the number of players in your game, between four and six.) The adventurers have previously answered the priestess's calls individually, and each character has recently obtained a ruby.

Drow spies have learned about Dareen's plans to create a magic item that could hamper their invasion plans. They mistakenly believe she has already made it, but the spies haven't discovered the item's exact nature or form. Therefore, a drow commander has ordered a force of about two dozen drow and dwarf mercenaries to tunnel beneath the temple, enter the holy site from its cellar, seize the item, kill or capture all witnesses, and depart without arousing the suspicions of anyone who could foil the larger invasion to come.

The drow team has successfully infiltrated the Temple of Lathander's Light, breaching the cellar and capturing Dareen and the other worshipers before anyone could make sense of the intrusion. The invaders haven't located the magic item they seek. With their ability to make a swift exit in jeopardy, Mistress Silhouette, the strike team's leader, has ordered her underlings to poison their hostages and to dose the priestess last, warning Dareen to turn over the magic item or watch her fellow worshipers die in about two hours' time. Knowing that everyone would be swiftly slaughtered or sold into slavery if she were to admit that the holy symbol does not yet exist, and realizing that the adventurers she hired to collect the rubies are slated to bring the gemstones to her this morning, Dareen has refused to speak.

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Now, as the invaders haul the hostages underground, the priestess prays the characters will arrive in time to thwart the drow and save the poisoned worshipers.

Adventure Synopsis

The adventurers arrive at the Temple of Lathander's Light, each in possession of a ruby that Dareen asked him or her to retrieve. The temple's entry hall is deserted, as are the temple's other chambers. After a brief investigation, the adventurers find signs of a struggle throughout the temple's rooms and corridors. In the kitchen, blood droplets indicate the presence of a hidden trapdoor, giving the adventurers access to the temple's forgotten cellar.

The cellar initially appears to be empty as well, but two dwarves and a drow archer confront the characters. Each of the dwarves uses a captive as a shield. After dealing with this rear guard and (ideally) rescuing the two captives, the characters learn about what is happening in the tunnels beneath the temple, where the rest of the hostages are held.

The adventurers descend, emerging into an ancient Underdark complex. The blood trail continues to a room containing an altar to Lolth, upon which more than a dozen hostages are bound. The adventurers can use stealth, trickery, and their knowledge of stonework to help defeat the enemies and rescue the captives.

After learning that two hostages are still missing, the characters can infer that a secret doorway exists somewhere along the route they've just traveled. Armed with this knowledge, they can more easily locate the hidden way. At the end of the secret passageway, a magically alarmed rune awaits the unwary. Disabling the alarm could give the adventurers the opportunity to surprise the leader of the strike team and her bodyguards. But the rune can also summon a water elemental. Summoning the elemental gives the characters a useful ally in the final fight.

If the characters succeed in saving the hostages and defeating the drow, Dareen Travaskyr creates the *visage of Lathander*. She then rewards the adventurers with treasure.

Running the Adventure

When the players are ready to begin, spread the pregenerated character sheets on the table. If four players are at your table, use Belgos, Brandis, Fargrim, and Valenae. If you have five players, add Keira. If you have six players, add Jarren.

Then hand out the appropriate background sheets to each player. Each sheet describes an adventurer's history, motivations, personality, and impressions about the other characters. Thus, they should be kept private. The background sheets are designed to help players jump into roleplaying.

In this adventure, the characters have a variety of tactics they can use to succeed at rescuing the worshipers and defeating the drow strike team. Since the play experience is meant to run for only two hours, it is important to let the characters' plans succeed to some degree whenever possible. If every encounter in this adventure turns into a full combat without the characters having weakened the enemy beforehand, the game will run longer than expected.

Arrival at the Temple

The characters arrive at the Temple of Lathander's Light at sunrise and find it deserted. Clues throughout the temple sketch out what has happened, leading to the temple's hidden cellar.

Light: Bright (skylights and windows).

Adjusting Difficulty

If you're running this adventure for new or casual players, you might want to decrease the adventure's difficulty. If you have experienced players who crave a greater challenge, or a full complement of six characters, you might want to make it a little more difficult.

You can add or subtract monsters, and increase or decrease monster hit points. (This latter tactic can be used on the fly, making the monster go down early or take an extra hit.) Raising or lowering skill check DCs by 2 can change task difficulty.

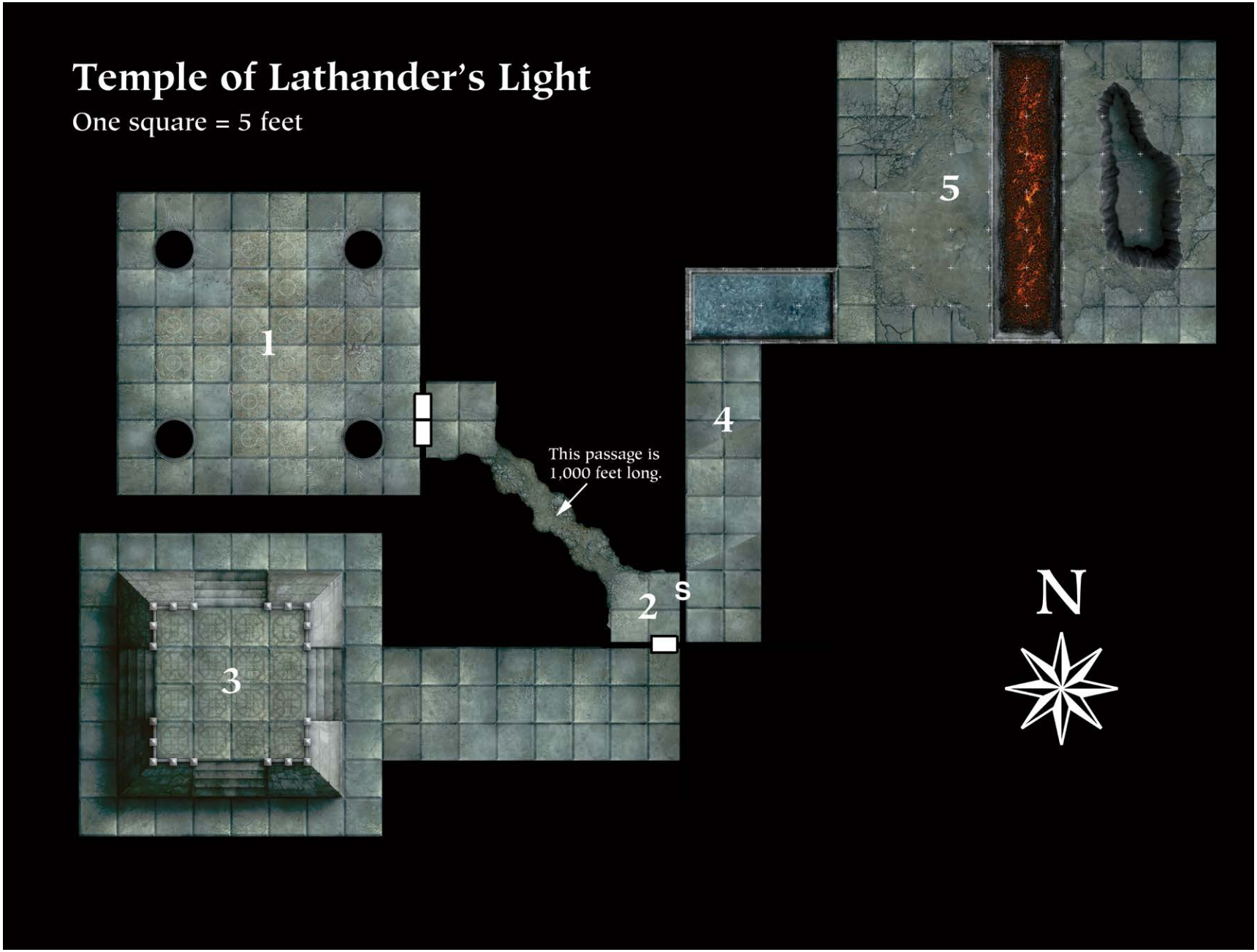
You can also adjust how players come by important information. You could tell inexperienced players, without having them roll any skill checks, that the ceiling in Area 3 looks weak in two places. You might require experienced players to take minor actions and roll skill checks to notice the same weak ceiling sections.

Area 1: The difficulty is low enough. To raise the difficulty, add another drow archer.

Area 3: To decrease the difficulty, increase the collapsing ceiling's damage output by reducing the enemies to one-quarter of their maximum hit points. To increase the difficulty, decrease the collapsing ceiling's damage output by reducing the enemies to three-quarters of their maximum hit points instead of their bloodied values.

Area 4: The difficulty doesn't really need to change, although you can adjust skill DCs.

Area 5: To decrease the encounter's difficulty, remove one Shadowdale drow scout. To increase the difficulty, add one Shadowdale drow scout.


Temple of Lathander's Light
One square = 5 feet
1
2
3
4
5
S
This passage is
1,000 feet long.
N

When the characters enter the temple, read:
You arrive at the Temple of Lathander's Light at dawn, as Her Radiance Dareen Travaskyr instructed. You notice several other adventurers here as well. Perhaps you were not the only one Her Radiance called upon.

Allow each player to introduce his or her character. Encourage players to describe their characters' physical traits and to engage in some roleplaying.

When the introductions are concluded, read:
The temple's antechamber, which should be bustling with activity during the sunrise prayers to Amaunator, is empty and silent. As the sun's rays chase the shadows from the room, they reveal broken furniture, scattered parchment, and spilled blood.

Investigation reveals that all the temple's rooms, from the sleeping quarters to the kitchen to the smallest storage chambers, are deserted. Furthermore, any areas that were likely to be inhabited at this time of the morning show signs of struggle, such as disturbed surroundings and splatters of blood.

When the initial search is over, read:
Further investigation of the temple turns up no one alive or dead. Not a soul is left inside.

Now the adventurers must use their abilities and deeper thinking to progress.

- If the players ask how many people might be in the temple at this time, tell them roughly twenty, including priests, acolytes, worshipers, and other visitors. As far as the characters know, no unusual events are scheduled, and it is not a holy day.
- While searching the temple, the character who has the highest Religion modifier turns up papers about Dareen Travaskyr's plan to create a holy object called the *visage of Lathander* using gems she has tasked adventurers to collect. She thinks these gems hold magical properties that she can manipulate to create the holy object.
- Questioning citizens outside the temple reveals that nothing strange was seen or heard in or near the temple recently.
- The adventurer who has the highest passive Insight realizes that valuables remain in the temple despite disheveled drawers, shelves, closets, and similar spaces. This fact tells of a swift and thorough search for something specific.
- The character who has the highest Heal modifier knows the blood was spilled about an hour ago.
- The character who has the highest passive Perception spots drops of a green substance splattered near some bloodstains. A successful DC 12 Heal check or Nature check reveals that the drops are a poison created through the distillation of an Underdark fungus. The substance kills its victims within a few hours. It is hard to counteract without the antidote, and if anyone was poisoned with it when the blood was spilled (see above), that person has about two hours to live.
- If the poison is identified, a successful DC 19 Dungeoneering check reveals it is a favorite of drow who dwell beneath the Dalelands. Drow who use this poison usually keep the antidote handy.
- With a DC 19 History check, an adventurer knows that drow who worked their way up from the Underdark originally inhabited this entire region. Also, this temple's original design included a cellar.
- The adventurer who has the highest passive Perception finds a pool of blood cut sharply in half in the far corner of the kitchen, revealing a trapdoor in the floor. Beneath the door, a ladder descends into a dark cellar.

When the adventurers piece together the clues, they can use the trapdoor to reach the forgotten cellar. The kitchen has two lanterns the characters can use for light if they need to.

DEFEAT OR SURRENDER

If a fight goes badly, the characters might surrender. (Crafty players might attempt to surrender as a way to infiltrate the areas below.) If a party is defeated or surrenders, its members are bound, poisoned, taken to area 3, and dumped beside the other captives. The adventurers' equipment is stored in sacks in a corner of the same room.

The party can then try to escape. A character can escape using a DC 19 Thievery check to undo the bonds, a DC 19 Athletics check to break the bonds, a DC 19 Acrobatics check to slip out of the bonds, or a DC 19 Bluff or Diplomacy check to convince the dwarves to defect or release the characters.

Area 1: Forgotten Cellar

Combat Encounter Level 1 (150 XP)

In the cellar, a drow and two dwarves, the rear guard of House Jaelre's strike team, confront the characters.

Light: Bright (one dwarf has a lantern).

Monsters: 2 dwarf warriors (D), Shadowdale drow archer (A).

Other Creatures: 2 human acolytes of Lathander.

When the adventurers first enter the cellar, the room contains no creatures.

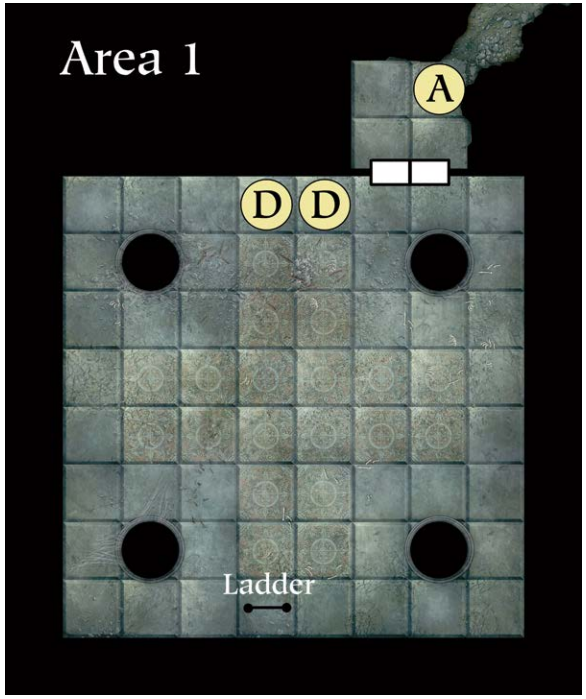
When the adventurers can see the cellar, read:
The wooden ladder connects the trapdoor to the floor of a cool cellar 10 feet below. The chamber is dusty but shows signs of lots of recent foot traffic. Ancient inscriptions

dedicating the site to Lathander decorate the floor. Four pillars bearing the holy visage of Lathander support the ceiling.

Brandis, Jarren, and Valenae instantly recognize the power held within the columns, which is described in the "Columns of Lathander" section, below.

When the adventurers enter, read:
Double doors on the far wall fly open. Two dwarves, each gripping the neck of a blindfolded, robed human in one hand and a crossbow in the other, stride inside. The dwarves' faces are tattooed with spiderweb patterns. They have intricately braided red hair.

A drow stands behind the dwarves, his crossbow trained on you. He smirks and then drawls condescendingly in Common, "We have many captives. Leave immediately, or we will kill them all."



GROUP CHECKS

When you call for a group check, have each player roll against the indicated DC. If at least half the characters succeed, the group succeeds.

The two humans, clearly temple acolytes or priests, whimper and tremble.

Heal DC 12: *The two hostages are pale and sweaty. They are sick or otherwise unwell.*

Group Insight DC 12: *These enemies are confident and do not expect attack. Immediate action might surprise them.*

Before the characters act, tell Fargrim's player that Fargrim realizes these dwarves belong to his clan. If Fargrim talks to the dwarves, addressing them as clanmates, they laugh and reveal that they work for the drow, helping to wipe out the weak remnants of the Ketterhold Clan.

This talk doesn't prevent the party from gaining a surprise round if the group Insight check succeeded. If the conversation occurs, though, Fargrim is enraged and gains a +2 power bonus to his damage rolls against these dwarves for the rest of the adventure.

Tactics

The dwarves hold their captives in front of them. Hostages provide partial cover to the dwarves (as well as the drow while he remains behind the warriors) against ranged attacks. While a dwarf warrior is grabbing a captive, the dwarf's speed is 2, but the hostage moves with the dwarf. If the adventurers attack, each dwarf warrior uses his second turn to try to slay his hostage (all defenses 10, hp 1).

2 Dwarf Warriors (D)	**Level 1 Minion Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 25 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +3
AC 15, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 12, **Will** 14	**Perception** +2
Speed 5	Low-light vision
TRAITS	
Dwarf Solidarity	
The dwarf gains a +4 bonus to AC and Reflex while adjacent to a dwarf ally.	
Stand the Ground	
The dwarf can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.	
Steady-Footed	
The dwarf can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock it prone.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
Warhammer (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 4 damage, or 6 while the dwarf is adjacent to a dwarf ally.	
Crossbow (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 30 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 4 damage, or 6 against a target that doesn't have cover.	
Str 13 (+1)	**Dex** 16 (+3) **Wis** 15 (+2)
Con 15 (+2)	**Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 10 (+0)
Alignment unaligned	**Languages** Common, Dwarven
Equipment chainmail, warhammer, crossbow, 20 bolts	

The drow archer prefers to remain behind the dwarves and the captives, attempting to convince the characters to surrender. If combat begins, the archer uses his first turn to attack with *felling shot*. If the adventurers are clearly winning by the archer's second turn, he takes another shot and then runs into the tunnel, intent on warning his allies (see "Exit Tunnel" below).

Columns of Lathander

Anyone who has training in History or Religion knows that when Amaunator appeared and proclaimed that he and the god Lathander were one, Lathander's worshipers feared they might be persecuted for continuing to worship Lathander. They began using hidden areas, such as this underground

Shadowdale Drow Archer (A)	Level 1 Artillery
Medium fey humanoid	XP 100
HP 24; **Bloodied** 12	**Initiative** +3
AC 15, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13	**Perception** +0
Speed 6	Darkvision
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Rapier** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 3 damage.	
➶ **Crossbow** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage.	
➶ **Felling Shot** (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 3 damage, and the target falls prone.	
Minor Actions	
➶ **Darkfire** ✦ **Encounter**	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex	
Hit: Until the end of the drow's next turn, the target grants combat advantage and cannot benefit from invisibility or concealment.	
Skills Stealth +8	
Str 10 (+0) **Dex** 16 (+3) **Wis** 10 (+0)	
Con 12 (+1) **Int** 11 (+0) **Cha** 13 (+1)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven	
Equipment leather armor, rapier, crossbow, 20 bolts	

room, for their rites. When Amaunator proved truthful, Lathander's followers came out to worship the sun god where they could bathe in his rays.

Arcana or Religion (DC 19 as a minor action; DC 12 as a standard action): The character causes every column to release a burst of blinding radiance. Any enemy within 2 squares of any pillar when this energy is triggered is blinded until the end of its next turn. The pillars then continue to glow for a time, bathing the area in bright, warm light for an hour.

Exit Tunnel

The rough tunnel on the map represents a passageway 1,000 feet (200 squares) in length. It is recently dug and is difficult terrain. The downward slope of the passage makes it impossible to see a target that is more than 8 squares away.

The characters can chase the drow archer if he flees this way. If he escapes, wary of revealing the secret door in area 2 to his pursuers, he joins his allies in area 3. Those allies choose to wait in ambush in the same positions, unaware of the faulty stonework over their heads.

Poisoned Hostages

If the adventurers rescue the hostages, Violeta and Strauk, the acolytes reveal that they have been poisoned. If the hostages both perished, the characters might still discover that the two were poisoned. If the characters found the poison during the search of the temple, they realize the humans are (or were) suffering the effect of that poison. Otherwise, the characters are again allowed a DC 10 Heal or Nature check to identify the poison, the task made easier by seeing the poison's effects.

The adventurers cannot cure the poison without the antidote. A successful DC 19 Dungeoneering check reveals that the poison is a favorite of drow that dwell beneath the Dalelands. Drow that use this poison keep the antidote handy.

Questioning Survivors

Acolytes: Violeta and Strauk were blindfolded as soon as they reached the cellar. They and their fellow captives were forced to trek down a long passageway, which ended in a flat area. The acolytes estimate the attackers first breached the temple an hour ago.

Violeta, the braver of the two, reports that all the prisoners either were forced to drink poison or were cut with poisoned weapons. From what she saw during the attack, about twenty-five attackers—mostly drow and dwarves—rounded up twenty captives. She suspects the dwarves are mercenaries, since they obey the drow.

A female drow, who seemed to be the leader, kept questioning Her Radiance Dareen Travaskyr about an object the drow believe the priestess possesses. The leader threatened to allow the poisoned captives to die if Her Radiance did not hand over the object. Dareen remained calm and silent, despite being poisoned and beaten. The drow have so far failed to find whatever they were looking for.

Enemies: If captured, the drow provides no information and refuses to give his name. The dwarves, Kroham and Wrought, identify themselves but do not speak further. An adventurer can bully them into talking with a successful DC 19 Intimidate check. The dwarves reveal they are mercenaries whom the drow regularly hire. They are part of a force of about a dozen dwarves and a dozen drow that attacked with orders to subdue everyone in the temple. They don't know the raid's purpose. The leader of the raiding

FAKE-PRISONER TRICK

After defeating enemies in area 1, the adventurers might decide to pretend to be guards and prisoners. Belgos and Fargrim could easily play the parts of strike team members. Others could pretend to be prisoners.

This trick could work on the enemies in area 3. DC 12 Bluff checks, Diplomacy checks, and Insight checks (individually or as a group) are the most relevant for playing out such a scene. If successful, the ploy definitely gains the characters a surprise round against their enemies. Furthermore, with the right story, the characters could learn a lot and move all the prisoners out of the area without a fight.

Using such a ruse against Mistress Silhouette is much less likely to work. With DC 19 Bluff checks, Diplomacy checks, and Insight checks, the adventurers might gain a favorable position in area 5 before their deception is discovered.

party, a female drow who calls herself Mistress Silhouette, was searching for something she hasn't yet found.

Area 2: Secret Room

Exploration Encounter

Deep beneath Dagger Falls, the newly carved tunnel connects the temple's cellar to drow passages.

Light: None.

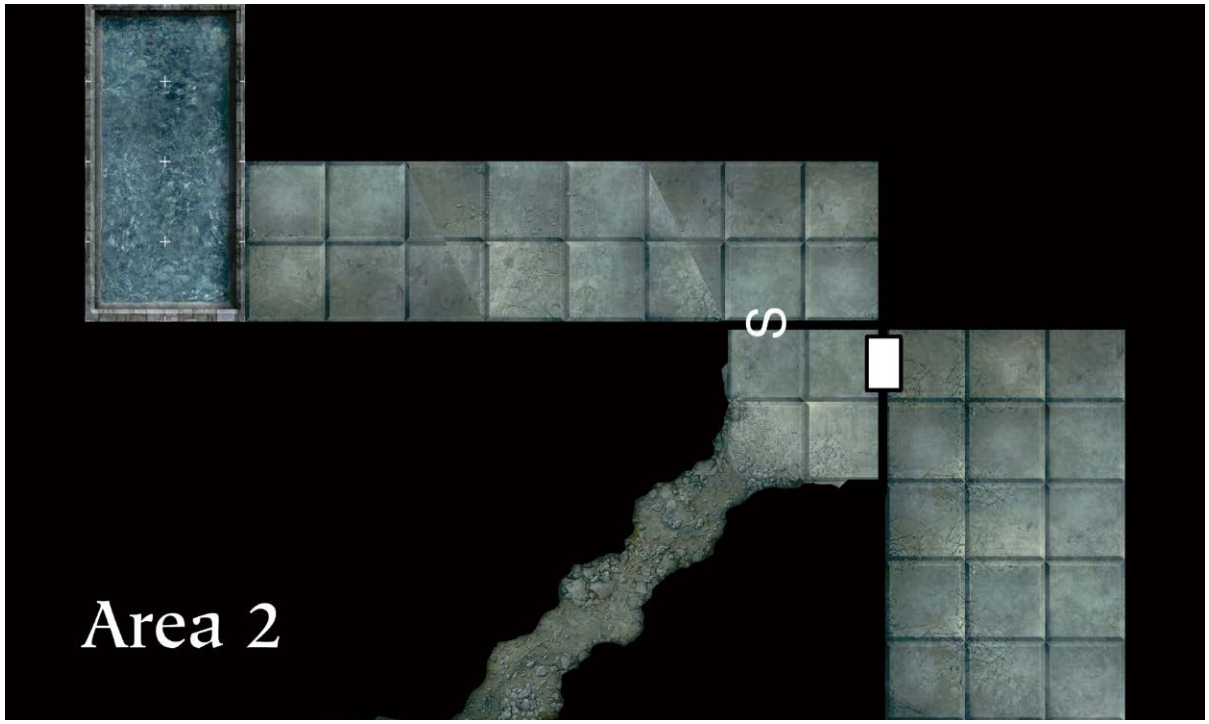
After traversing the exit tunnel (which takes about five minutes at a normal pace), the adventurers arrive in a small chamber.

Read:
The tunnel slopes into a 10-foot-square room of smooth, whorled stone. Inside is a faint trail of blood leading toward a closed stone door on the far wall.

Dungeoneering DC 12: *This room is drow work, but it was carved with the help of water.*

If the characters search the room, a successful DC 19 Perception check reveals a secret door in the wall (see the map). If the characters find the secret door right away, they might tackle areas 4 and 5 before arriving in area 3. That's fine—it won't affect the adventure's outcome to run the encounters in that order.

If the characters return here after learning that two captives, one of whom is Her Radiance Dareen Travaskyr, are still missing, give them a +4 bonus to their Perception checks to search for the door if they don't know it's here. (They might learn about it in area 3.)



Area 3: Spider Altar

Combat Encounter Level 1 (575 XP)

Light: Bright (torches).

Ceiling: The ceiling is 20 feet above the main floor and 10 feet above the raised altar.

Monsters: Shadowdale drow informant (I), deathjump spider (S), 3 dwarf clan guards (G).

Other Creatures: 16 poisoned captives.

Read:
This corridor of smooth, whorled stone eventually opens into a large, torchlit chamber. You hear an occasional gasp or whimper, as well as a few voices in muffled conversation. You can't make out what they are saying.

Group Stealth DC 12: If the group is successful, the party reaches the altar room unnoticed.

When the party can see the room, read:
Torchlight illuminates swaths of thick webs. The densest webs hang over a 10-foot-high platform with carved stairways leading to its top. Other webs hang down and obscure the lower parts of the room farthest from you. The ceiling is still visible above the webs.

Sounds of movement and the moaning of people in pain come from atop the platform. Quiet conversations drift into hearing from beyond the webs, but no creature can be seen.

Dungeoneering DC 12 or Perception DC 19:
The stonework above the two corners of the chamber farthest from you is weak and cracked. Damaging the ceiling could collapse it, raining stone down on anyone beneath. The quiet conversations come from areas where such a collapse is likely to occur.

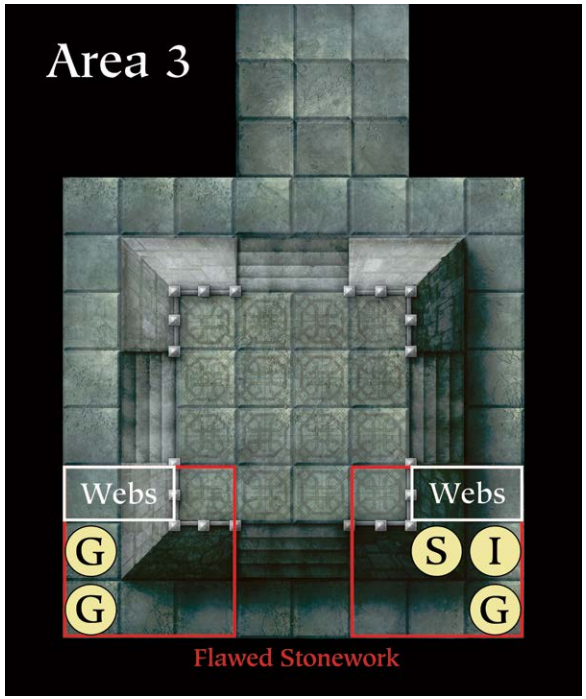
Webs

As shown on the map, thick webs extend from the chamber's walls to the altar and floor. The webs block line of sight and are difficult terrain. If the ceiling falls, however, the webs also fall.

Flawed Stonework

Each character has a chance to spot the flawed stonework. An adventurer who does notice realizes that if either of the weakened ceiling sections takes any damage from an attack that targets AC, Reflex, or Fortitude, those 9 squares of stonework will collapse on the area directly below them.

The defenses for the weakened ceiling sections are AC 10, Reflex 8, Fortitude 12. Any nonminion creature in a square beneath collapsing stone becomes bloodied and falls prone. The area becomes difficult terrain full of rubble. (Minions, such as the captives, are killed.)



The problem with collapsing the stonework is that it sounds like hostages might be atop the platform and under those ceiling sections. Characters can ascend the platform to see that this theory is accurate.

Platform

Stairways in the platform are difficult terrain, and the sloped sides are smooth (DC 12 Athletics to climb). Each square of the 4-by-4-square platform top contains one hostage, and for that reason, each square is difficult terrain.

When a character moves up the steps, read:
Amid tattered webs, captives lie on the platform, their wrists and ankles bound with rope. Their pale, sweaty faces are etched with pain. As you take in the structure's markings, you realize this platform is an altar to Lolth, the Spider Queen, goddess of the drow.

Those who know about the faulty stonework can see that two captives, a halfling in leather clothing and a robed priest, are beneath the hazard. Anyone can see that dropping the ceiling is likely to kill those two.

Helping the Captives

The captives include humans, elves, halflings, and half-elves. A halfling trapper named Stottler, who was at the temple to say a prayer to Amaunator before a hunt, is in the platform square closest to the chamber's bottom left corner (as viewed on the map). Brother Broadwine, a human priest of Amaunator, is in the platform square nearest to the room's bottom right corner. Despite having been poisoned, both captives are conscious, but they are bound and prone.

Stealth: The adventurers have total cover from their enemies, thanks to the platform and the webs. Moaning and shifting captives cover some noise and confuse the spider's tremorsense. The characters can move onto and about the altar unnoticed as long as they remain quiet (DC 12 group Stealth check). Once there, they have a chance to move Stottler and Brother Broadwine out of danger.

Make a Captive Move: A character can take a minor action to attempt a DC 12 Bluff check or Diplomacy check to urge a captive to move. As long as the character succeeds on a DC 12 Stealth check, too, he or she can do so quietly enough to attract no attention from the foes here. The player's description of the action might preclude the need for a Stealth check.

Move a Captive: A character can take a minor action to grab a captive and a move action to slide the captive out of the way.

Shielding a Captive: An adventurer can use his or her body to shield a captive. If this is done, the character takes damage equal to his or her healing surge value if the ceiling falls. The shielded captive takes no damage.

Tactics

Until the drow, the dwarves, and the spider are alerted to the characters' presence, the creatures remain in place. When they notice the adventurers, the drow informant orders the dwarves and the spider to attack. If the characters remain unnoticed until they decide to attack, they gain a surprise round.

The spider uses *prodigious leap* to pounce on the least armored character in range. It then uses *bite*.

Meanwhile, the dwarves heft their weapons and use *double hammer strike* against foes clearly aligned with Amaunator.

The drow uses *vanish* and moves into a good position to attack. If a character takes a minor action to make a successful DC 19 Perception check, that character knows which square the invisible drow occupies. If the ceiling has fallen, dust in the room grants a +2 bonus to this check.

When the informant is near death, she turns invisible again and flees the room. She heads for the secret

Shadowdale Drow Informant (I) **Level 1 Lurker**
Medium fey humanoid XP 100

HP 25; **Bloodied** 12 **Initiative** +7
AC 15, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13 **Perception** +1
Speed 6 Darkvision

Standard Actions

⊕ **Dagger** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 2d4 + 3 damage, or 4d4 + 6 if the drow was invisible to the target when the drow attacked.

Vanish (illusion) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The drow becomes invisible, then shifts up to 3 squares. It remains invisible until the end of its next turn or until it hits or misses with an attack.

Minor Actions

Cloud of Darkness (zone) ✦ **Encounter**
Effect: Close burst 1. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the drow's next turn. The cloud blocks line of sight for all creatures except the drow. While entirely in the cloud, any creature other than the drow is blinded.

Skills Acrobatics +8, Stealth +8, Thievery +8
Str 13 (+1) **Dex** 16 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+1)
Con 13 (+1) **Int** 12 (+1) **Cha** 14 (+2)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment black cloak, dagger

door in area 2 and runs to area 5 to alert Mistress Silhouette to the goings-on in the altar room. If she makes it, she joins the fight there.

Questioning Survivors

Captives: The captives know that Her Radiance Dareen Travaskyr and her personal assistant, a human called Brother Rhobart (with whom Jarren is friends), were taken somewhere else. If Brother Broadwine is alive and awake, he tells the characters that the drow are here searching for the *visage of Lathander*, but Dareen has yet to create the item. He explains that Her Radiance denied the drow this knowledge because she feared they would kill the worshipers or sell them into slavery if they knew. He emphasizes how important it is that the attackers continue to believe the object exists.

Deathjump Spider (J) **Level 4 Skirmisher**
Medium natural beast (spider) XP 175

HP 52; **Bloodied** 26 **Initiative** +5
AC 18, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15 **Perception** +7
Speed 6, climb 6 (spider climb) Tremorsense 5
Resist 5 poison

Traits

Web Walk
The spider ignores difficult terrain composed of webs.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Bite** (poison) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 3 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

↓ **Death from Above** ✦ **Recharge** ⚅ ⚄ ⚃
Effect: The spider jumps up to 6 squares. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks. After the jump, the spider uses *bite*, knocking the target prone on a hit.

Move Actions

Prodigious Leap ✦ **Encounter**
Effect: The spider jumps up to 10 squares. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.

Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +8
Str 14 (+4) **Dex** 12 (+3) **Wis** 10 (+2)
Con 12 (+3) **Int** 1 (-3) **Cha** 8 (-1)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

These captives also know of the poison. If the characters have yet to identify it, Stottler (if alive) can tell them all about it.

Enemies: The drow informant refuses to answer questions or identify herself. The dwarves also decline to talk. An adventurer can compel them to spill what they know with a successful DC 19 Intimidate check. The dwarves—Abril, Seelya, and Pruitt—tell the characters that a secret door exists in area 2, and the passageway behind the door leads to the Underdark crevice the strike team used to reach this area. With amused looks, the clan guards also tell the characters that the force's troops rode up from Underdark on giant spiders. (This is true, although the spiders are now gone.)

Treasure: One of the dwarf clan guards has a *potion of healing* carried in a pewter hip flask.

3 Dwarf Clan Guards (G) **Level 1 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid XP 100 each

HP 33; **Bloodied** 16 **Initiative** +3
AC 17, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 15 **Perception** +8
Speed 5 Low-light vision

Traits

Stand the Ground
The dwarf can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.

Steady-Footed
The dwarf can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock it prone.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Warhammer** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 3 damage, and the dwarf can push the target 1 square. The dwarf can then shift 1 square to a square the target vacated.
Effect: The dwarf marks the target until the end of the dwarf's next turn.

↝ **Throwing Hammer** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 4 damage, and the dwarf marks the target until the end of the dwarf's next turn.

↓↝ **Double Hammer Strike** (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚅ ⚄ ⚃
Effect: The dwarf uses *warhammer* and then uses *throwing hammer*. The dwarf does not provoke opportunity attacks for this use of *throwing hammer*.

Str 16 (+3) **Dex** 12 (+1) **Wis** 17 (+3)
Con 17 (+3) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 10 (+0)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Dwarven
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, warhammer, 4 throwing hammers

Area 4: Alarm and Water

Exploration Encounter

At the end of the passage beyond the secret door, a rune has been carved into the floor on the edge of a pool.

Light: None. (Dim when the rune starts to glow.)

When the characters can see this area, read:
A corridor stretches ahead of you, dead-ending against a pool filled with still, clear water. A narrow ledge surrounds the pool, and a blue rune is etched into the floor between you and the water. It glows as you approach.

Arcana or Perception DC 12: *The rune is active and magical. It might be a trap.*

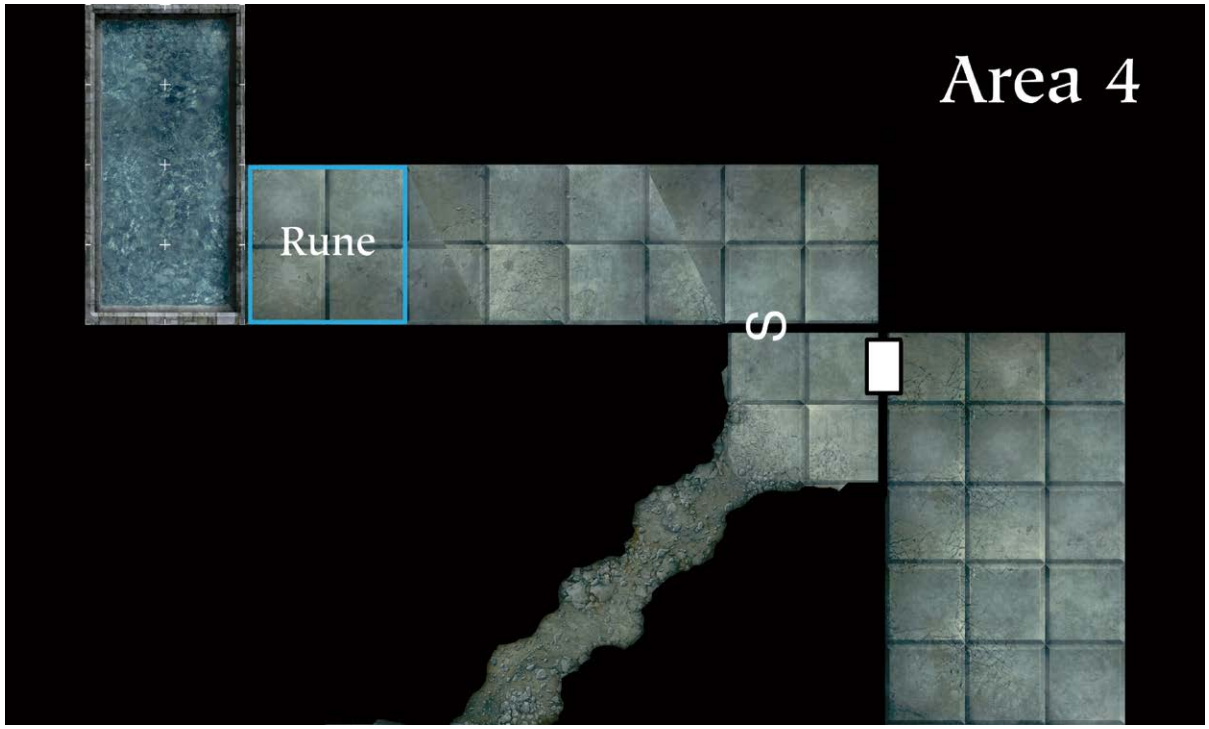
The rune glows with dim blue light when the adventurers move within 2 squares of it.

Water Passage

The water is difficult terrain.

Pool Ledge: With a successful DC 12 Acrobatics check, a character can move along the ledge at full speed. If an adventurer fails the check, he or she can move along the ledge at half speed, unless the check result is 7 or lower. Then the character falls prone in the water, ending the movement and alerting the enemies in area 5 to the party's presence.

Stealth: If the characters wish to move quietly through the water, or past it on the ledge, they must succeed on a DC 12 group Stealth check to do so. Failure indicates that one of Mistress Silhouette's scouts hears the party's movement in the water and alerts his allies in area 5 to the approach of intruders.



Alarm Trap

A successful DC 19 Arcana check, Religion check, or Thievery check is required to remove the trap from the rune. If the trap is disarmed, the alarm fails to sound when someone steps on the rune.

If an adventurer enters a rune square while the trap is still armed, or the check result to disable the trap is 13 or lower, a bell rings throughout the chamber. The loud peals alert Mistress Silhouette and her bodyguards, making it impossible to surprise them.

Arcana DC 12 (after the alarm goes off or is disarmed): Magic remains in the rune. This magic is connected to the pool just ahead.

Summoning Rune

Stepping into a rune square causes the pool to swirl.

Arcana, Nature, or Religion DC 12: The rune can be used to summon a lesser water elemental.

History DC 19: Ages ago, magic-wielding drow summoned water elementals to erode stone and help them create tunnels. The smooth, whorled stone in this underground area must have been carved using such elementals.

Summoning: While standing in a rune square, an adventurer can summon an elemental by making a successful DC 19 Arcana check, Nature check, or Religion check. (Jarren gains a +2 bonus to such checks.) Up to three adventurers, each of whom must also stand in a rune square, can assist the primary summoner.

If the primary summoner fails a skill check to summon an elemental, the party loses this ability to summon an elemental during this adventure.

If the summons is successful, an elemental appears, and the primary summoner can mentally command it as a minor action. Once commanded, the elemental acts independently (but the players make its rolls). It defends itself if attacked. The elemental remains until the end of the next encounter, until it is dismissed (a minor action), or until it is killed.

Only one elemental can be summoned in this way.

Lesser Water Elemental	Level 1 Controller
Small elemental natural beast (aquatic, water)	XP 100
HP 29; **Bloodied** 14	**Initiative** +2
AC 15, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 12	**Perception** +0
Speed 6, swim 6	
Traits	
Aquatic	
The elemental can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures.	
Sensitive to Cold	
Whenever the elemental takes cold damage, it gains vulnerable 5 against the next attack that hits it before the end of its next turn.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Slam** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +4 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 1d6 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).	
✧ **Whelm** ✦ **Encounter**	
Attack: Close blast 3 (enemies in the blast); +4 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 2d6 + 2 damage, and the elemental pushes the target up to 2 squares and knocks it prone.	
Minor Actions	
Drowning Essence ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)	
Effect: The elemental slides each creature taking ongoing damage from its *slam* 1 square.	
Str 16 (+3) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 11 (+0)	
Con 13 (+1) **Int** 5 (-3) **Cha** 8 (-1)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** understands Primordial	

Area 5: Strike Team

Combat Encounter Level 1 (624 XP)

The drow strike team's breaching of this area started in this chamber, which contains a deep crevice.

Light: Bright (fiery mist). If the mist is dissipated, the room becomes dark.

Monsters: Mistress Silhouette (Shadowdale drow totemist) (T), 2 Shadowdale drow scouts (S), 4 bone spiders (B).

Other Creatures: The lesser water elemental might be present. Two captives are also here: Her Radiance Dareen Travaskyr and Brother Rhobart.

If the characters successfully approached stealthily from area 4, they have a surprise round, presupposing that they know the foes here are present and no other event has prevented the chance of surprise. If the characters enter the room openly without using the surprise round to attack (for instance, because the characters are unaware of any enemies) the bone spiders spot them and combat begins normally.

When the adventurers enter the room, read:
This chamber contains a peculiar red mist in the area before you. The mist spans the room, blocking sight beyond it. Tracks in the dust on the floor reveal that numerous human-sized creatures have passed through here.

Perception DC 12: *Dancing tongues of fire flare up from place to place inside the mist.*

Perception DC 19: *Spidery shapes lurk in the mist.*

After the temple was taken, most of the strike team returned to the Underdark on their spiders. A few guards and Mistress Silhouette remained behind. They have been torturing Brother Rhobart and Dareen Travaskyr in an effort to compel the priestess to reveal the location and the nature of the magic object they believe she has created. The two priests are weak, but they remain conscious.

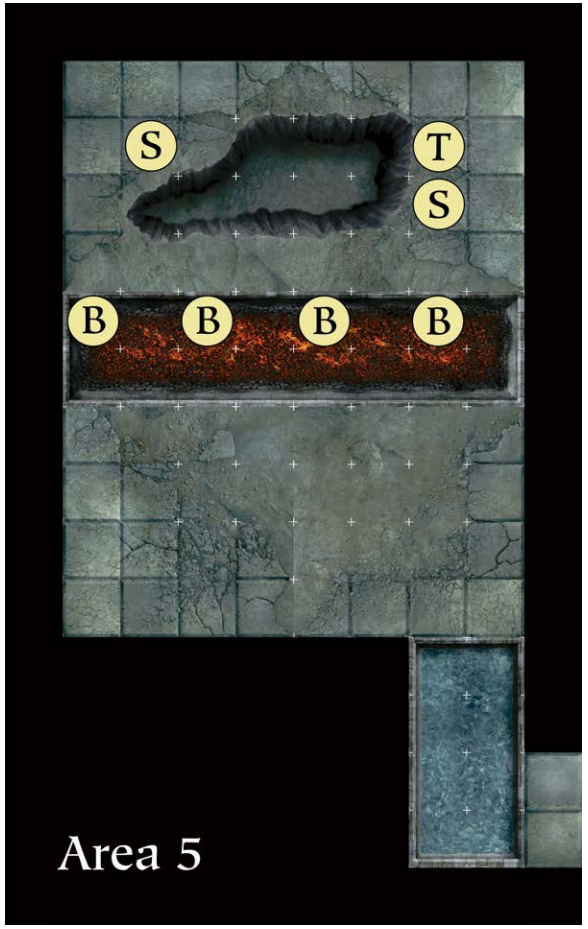
Fiery Mist

Mistress Silhouette used a ritual to create an area of fiery mist that protects the strike team's staging area. When she created the mist, she ensured that drow, dwarves, and spiders could pass through it without damage. Therefore, Belgos and Fargrim are immune to the mist's effect.

Effect: The mist contains elemental fire energy. Any creature that is not a drow, a dwarf, or a spider that enters the mist or starts its turn there takes 3 fire damage. A creature can take this damage only once per turn.

Obscured: The mist's area is lightly obscured (providing partial concealment). It blocks line of sight (total concealment) if the line goes through 2 squares of it.

Water Elemental: With a successful DC 19 Arcana check or Nature check (free action), an adventurer knows that sending the water elemental into the fiery mist will cause the mist to dissipate. If the elemental enters the mist, both the mist and the elemental disappear.



Shadowdale Drow Totemist (T) Level 3 Controller
Medium fey humanoid XP 150

HP 46; **Bloodied** 23 **Initiative** +2
AC 17, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15 **Perception** +8
Speed 6 Darkvision

Traits

☼ **Dark Pact Mobility** ✦ **Aura** 5
Bloodied allies in the aura automatically succeed on saving throws against slowing effects and immobilizing effects.

Standard Actions

⨺ **Totem Bite** (poison, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

➢ **Venom Ray** (implement, poison) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d12 + 5 poison damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of its next turn.

Minor Actions

Spider Swarm (poison, zone) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Effect: Close burst 2. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the encounter or until the totemist uses *spider swarm* again. Enemies grant combat advantage while in the zone, and any enemy that ends its turn there takes 5 poison damage.

Skills Arcana +10, Intimidate +9
Str 11 (+1) **Dex** 12 (+2) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 18 (+5) **Cha** 16 (+4)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment robes, spider totem

Underdark Crevice

The crack in the floor of this chamber is more than 100 feet deep, but it doesn't descend straight down. Creatures forced into this fissure fall only 10 feet before landing on a ledge, taking 1d10 damage. With a DC 12 Athletics check, a creature can climb out of the crevice.

Tactics

The bone spiders lurk in the mist, watching the approach corridor. (The mist prevents them from having a clear view.) They wait in ambush unless they are spotted. In that case, they retreat to entice enemies into entering the mist. A bone spider uses *skitter* to gain combat advantage over a creature before using *bite*.

When Mistress Silhouette realizes the adventurers are approaching, she and her drow ready their attacks. They want to force their foes to enter the mist and remain there. If the mist is still active when combat takes place, Mistress Silhouette favors using *venom ray* to immobilize foes inside it.

Mistress Silhouette uses *spider swarm* so a drow scout can gain combat advantage against enemies, causing the scout's *combat advantage* trait to kick in. If a scout cannot gain combat advantage another way, it uses *cloud of darkness* before unleashing *two-weapon attack* to wallop an enemy adjacent to it.

2 Shadowdale Drow Scouts (S) Level 2 Skirmisher
Medium fey humanoid XP 125 each

HP 38; **Bloodied** 19 **Initiative** +6
AC 16, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13 **Perception** +6
Speed 6 Darkvision

Traits

Combat Advantage
The drow deals ongoing 3 poison damage (save ends) against any creature granting combat advantage to it.

Standard Actions

⨺ **Longsword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage.
Effect: The drow can shift 1 square.

⸸ **Short Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage.
Effect: The drow can shift up to 2 squares.

⸸ **Two-Weapon Attack** ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Effect: The drow uses *longsword* and *short sword*.

Minor Actions

Cloud of Darkness (zone) ✦ **Encounter**
Effect: Close burst 1. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the drow's next turn. The cloud blocks line of sight for all creatures except the drow. While entirely in the cloud, any creature other than the drow is blinded.

Skills Stealth +9
Str 12 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 11 (+1)
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 11 (+1) **Cha** 13 (+2)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Elven
Equipment leather armor, longsword, short sword

4 Bone Spiders (B) Level 2 Minion Skirmisher
Small fey animate (construct, spider) XP 31 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +6
AC 16, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14 **Perception** +3
Speed 6 Darkvision

Standard Actions

⨺ **Bite** (poison) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 5 poison damage, or 7 poison damage against a target granting combat advantage to the spider.

Move Actions

Skitter ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The spider must have taken no actions this turn.
Effect: The bone spider shifts up to half its speed.

Str 12 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 9 (+0) **Int** 1 (-4) **Cha** 7 (-1)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Conclusion

If they defeat Mistress Silhouette, the adventurers find enough antidote to save all the captives. Regardless, if the adventurers fail to defeat the drow force before the end of the second hour of play, the poison kills the captives. If any prisoners survive, Her Radiance asks the adventurers to help escort the weakened innocents back up to the temple.

After Dareen and Brother Rhobart have settled the worshipers and healed the injured, including each other, the priestess collects the rubies from the adventurers. She places the rubies on a plain gold symbol and begins the ritual to create the *visage of Lathander*. After a few hours, she succeeds in doing so. When the item is finished, she removes the rubies, sets each into a small medallion, and gives them back to the adventurers as payment for their bravery. She tells them the rubies are now infused with magical energy that can help them in their battle against the drow.

If a player wants to keep his or her character, Dareen can instead embed the gem in a piece of gear, granting that player's character one of the following items.

- *Flaming weapon* (Dungeons & Dragons Essentials™ *Dungeon Master's Book*, page 257)
- *Armor of durability* (Dungeons & Dragons Essentials™ *Dungeon Master's Book*, page 255)
- *Amulet of health* (Dungeons & Dragons Essentials™ *Dungeon Master's Book*, page 266)

Dareen then tells the adventurers she has been having vivid dreams of a drow invasion of the Dalelands, and she believes the incursion is going to happen soon. She asks the characters to travel to Shadowdale and speak to Ghessla Silvermane, proprietor of the Old Skull Inn.

The adventurers can gain access to the Underdark's upper levels through the Old Skull Inn's cellar. Perhaps from there, they can learn more about the impending invasion. Dareen also mentions that if the characters tell Ghessla that Her Radiance sent them, the innkeeper might offer them free meals, free lodging for a night, and, most important, free access to the Underdark.

About the Author

Shawn Merwin is a technical writer and freelance game designer whose work for Wizards of the Coast includes *Dungeon Delve*™, *Assault on Nightwyrm Fortress*™, and *Halls of Undermountain*™. He has been an administrator in many of Wizards of the Coast's organized play campaigns, and his thoughts on RPGs and game design are featured in his "Know Your Roll" column at Critical-Hits.com.

Belgos, Male Drow Ranger

You were born and raised in the forest of Cormanthor, where you lived among drow who came to the surface after being kicked out of their houses. You and your extended family established an uncomfortable but lasting truce with surface dwellers.

Your frequent forest explorations quickly taught you how to navigate the woodlands as easily as your ancestors did the caverns of their homeland. Eventually, you gained a reputation as a skilled hunter and tracker, and you struck out on your own, accepting work as a guide, hunter, and mercenary.

Lately, you have begun exploring caverns and underground tunnels. Although you love the forest, you are beginning to appreciate the underground realm your forebears called home. You have come into contact with a handful of Underdark-dwelling drow and learned a bit about that dark world's rumors and intrigues.

A priestess of Amaunator, Her Radiance Dareen Travaskyr, recently hired you to track down a rare ruby that was within a treasure cache rumored to have been lost in the forest. Using the directions the priestess provided, you found the treasure.

During your journey back to Dagger Falls, you encountered drow trekking through the forest. You hid before they could see you, watching and listening as they passed. You could tell these drow were not forest dwellers as your people are, and it sounded like they were speaking of an attack. You believe they are members of House Jaelre, a community of dark elves that left the surface several years ago to return to the Underdark and take its self-proclaimed rightful place among the greatest houses. You know that House Jaelre drow are ruthless and conniving.

Night is fading as you approach the Temple of Lathander's Light in Dagger Falls in Daggerdale. The priestess asked you to bring the gem to her at dawn.

Personality

You are keenly aware that most surface dwellers think—often rightfully—drow to be cruel and duplicitous. For that reason, you make every attempt to be jovial, likable, and kind to others. You keep your word, and you seek out those who do the same.

When you are injured or see evil forces bullying or hurting creatures, the darkness in your soul bleeds into your countenance and actions. Your former allies in arms have learned that when life is on the line, a terrifying and vicious fighter usurps control of the pleasant comrade they thought they knew.

The Others

Fargrim: You are accustomed to people looking at you with fear, caution, or dislike. The unfiltered hatred in this dwarf's eyes when he glares at you is downright unsettling, though. Maybe if you work extra hard at making him like you, he will see you are nothing like other drow. Maybe you should try complimenting his carefully braided red hair and beard.

Brandis: This guy is big. Wow. And he looks like he knows how to use that sword. He wears a holy symbol similar to the ones this temple's priests wear, but he doesn't have a priest's appearance, and he doesn't seem perfectly comfortable here either.

Valenae: This eladrin cleric of Amaunator looks extremely nervous. Her hand goes to her mace at the slightest noise. You wonder what has jangled her nerves.

Keira: This elf appears to be quiet and unassuming, but you suspect a lot of thinking is going on beneath her placid exterior.

Jarren: Obviously a wizard, this human wears a bored expression. It is hard to tell whether this look is normal or if he feels he is above these mundane worldly concerns.

Brandis, Male Human Paladin

You were born and raised in Shadowdale. Your kin proudly serve in the militia when not attending to the farm your family has owned for generations. The farming life did not excite you, and mere militia duty was not your destiny. Showing promise as a warrior and diplomat, you trained with an order of paladins dedicated to Amaunator, the sun god. You finished that training, and since then, you have fought bravely against many of civilization's enemies.

Recently, your commander sent you to Dagger Falls in Daggerdale, near your homeland, to perform a task for Her Radiance Dareen Travaskyr. Your commander warned you that the priestess and worshipers at the Temple of Lathander's Light held to some old traditions, including calling your god Lathander instead of Amaunator. He assured you, however, that in all ways these people should be considered your spiritual kin.

When you arrived at the Temple of Lathander's Light, Her Radiance asked you to search an ancient ruin for a ruby. Although she did not tell you why she needed it, you know these rare gemstones are considered holy to Amaunator. You secured the gem and began making your way back to the Temple of Lathander's Light.

Since you came into possession of the ruby, your dreams have been troubled. You see visions of dark creatures crawling out of a great gouge in the earth, their fangs dripping vile poison. It is difficult to tell whether Amaunator is trying to give you a warning or if the mutton stew you supped on recently did not settle properly.

Night is fading as you approach the Temple of Lathander's Light. Her Radiance asked you to bring the gemstone to her at dawn.

Personality

You know you are not perfect, but you are a natural leader. Every group needs one. You don't attempt to solve everything yourself, but you are particularly adept at finding the best person to solve the problem and positioning him or her to do so.

The Others

Belgos: You know that some of the drow who settled in the forest of Cormanthor have lived peacefully with others for years. They don't display the evil tendencies of their Underdark compatriots. This archer must be one of those peaceful drow. After all, he is at a temple of Amaunator.

Fargrim: You've dealt with people like this dwarf before. He knows how to wield a greataxe and take a blow well enough, but he is lacking something inside. Amaunator could fill that hole within him, making the fighter a true warrior in body and spirit. Maybe if you told him about the glory of the sun god, the dwarf would awaken.

Valenae: You have a strong affinity for people who have chosen a path similar to yours. Thus, you are determined to use your zeal, holiness, and skill to support and impress this eladrin cleric of Amaunator.

Keira: A few weeks ago, you and your fellow warriors of Amaunator received word that a Shadovar spy was seen skulking around the Dalelands. You apprehended him and found with him an elf who appeared to be his captive. You never found out why the evil Netherese had seized the dark-haired female. Now that elf is here with you, and you do not trust her.

Jarren: If there's one thing worse than a wizard, it's a wizard who thinks he knows everything. Something tells you this guy fits that bill and is not afraid to foist his opinions on everyone. Sure, the wizard might know a lot of facts and figures. But until he's tasted an enemy's cold steel, he should not presume to lead.

Fargrim, Male Dwarf Fighter

You were born into the Ketterhold Clan, which had spent generations mining the Desertsmouth Mountains' depths. When you were a child, a drow army raided your clan's territory. Your people fought bravely, but the drow force was too strong. Some of your people escaped, but most were killed or dragged off into the Underdark, presumably to be used as slaves. Those dwarves who escaped hired out as miners for various outfits, but you wanted more. You trained as a mercenary, and soon you became an adventurer.

You happened to be passing through Dagger Falls in Daggerdale when Her Radiance Dareen Travaskyr, a priestess of Amaunator, approached you. She asked if you had any knowledge of gemstone mining, which you did from your youth. She told you she needed a ruby, a rare gemstone the sun god favors. She offered you a good bit of reward if you could secure one for her.

After consulting your kinfolk who still mine the earth, you secured a ruby and returned to Dagger Falls to turn it over to the priestess.

Night is fading as you approach the Temple of Lathander's Light. Her Radiance asked you to bring the gemstone to her at dawn.

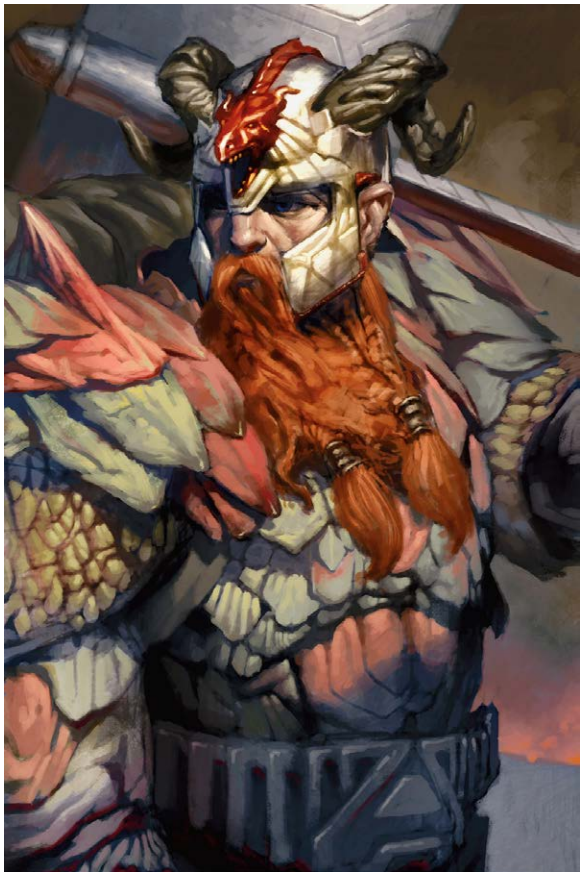
Personality

The treacherous sundering of your clan by drow rankles you constantly, making you angry and sullen. Since you started training as a fighter, you have dedicated yourself to becoming as strong as possible, to bring honor to your family name and to be ready to spill blood when next you see those murderous tunnel rats.

You carefully braid your red hair and red beard in the way of your clan. Everyone you take to and adventure with knows you are the last of Clan Ketterhold's mighty warriors and that you intend to do whatever you must to see the clan's fortunes rise again.

The Others

Belgos: You cannot believe that a vile drow would defile a holy place with his presence. Your gut tells you he must be embroiled in mischief or mayhem even as he stands there smiling at you in that creepy, annoying way. The only thing keeping you from attacking him outright is that everyone else seems okay with him.



Brandis: For Moradin's sake, if this guy mentions his god once more, you are going to have to bury your axe in his skull. Surely that would stop the human's blathering. Hopefully his sword works as well as his mouth.

Valenae: In your journeys through the Dalelands, you have crossed paths with this eladrin before. Even though you have never fought shoulder to shoulder together in combat, she offers a sympathetic ear as easily as a battle brother would. She clearly enjoys hearing about Clan Ketterhold and your dream of leading your people back to their ancestral mines.

Keira: This elf seems like a kindred spirit. She has the look of someone who has been displaced from her home and forced to wander in search of a purpose.

Jarren: A wizard is a wizard is a wizard. As long as he stays out of your way and doesn't blow you up with an errant spell, you'll have no trouble with him.

Valenae, Female Eladrin Cleric (Amaunator)

You were born and raised in Myth Drannor and were taught at a young age about the majesty of the sun god, Amaunator. Positioned for a life of service and contemplation in the city, you longed for more. You wanted to adventure, to serve your god in a more direct and exciting manner. Finally, after much training, you gained your superiors' trust and permission to leave, and you headed out on your own.

So far, you haven't had much opportunity to strike a blow against evil on Amaunator's behalf. You show up either in the wrong place or just moments too late to dive into your first grand adventure. Recently, a priest of your deity took pity on you, telling you that Her Radiance Dareen Travaskyr of the Temple of Lathander's Light in Dagger Falls might have a mission for you. Although some people whisper that the temple worshipers' insistence on using the old beliefs tied to Lathander is strange, you have no issue with it. Besides, everyone knows Amaunator and Lathander are two faces of the same god.

So you set off on the first real task of your new career. When you arrived, Her Radiance asked you to travel to Sembia to collect a rare ruby from a particular merchant and return the gemstone to her. The priestess said she thinks she can use it and other rubies to create a powerful magic item. Disappointed that what you thought would be your first true fight turned out to be a simple errand, you completed the mission nonetheless.

Night is fading as you approach the Temple of Lathander's Light. The priestess asked you to bring the gemstone to her at dawn. You hope Her Radiance might have a more exciting task for you this time.

Personality

Nervous, excitable, and easily perturbed, deep down inside you doubt your ability to be brave when you face your first real battle. You are both slightly anxious and terribly enthusiastic at the prospect of smashing something in the face with your mace. Your innate nervousness prevents you from speaking up until you have complete confidence in the accuracy of what you intend to say.

You have the habit of running your fingers over your prized possession, a gold holy symbol of Amaunator that your favorite teacher gave you.

The Others

Belgos: When you were an acolyte, you accompanied an elder into the heart of Cormanthor to speak to the drow community there. Most of the residents were standoffish at best. A few drow were accepting of your words, though, despite not converting to worship of Amaunator. This ranger reminds you of the nicer drow you met there.

Fargrim: You and Fargrim have crossed paths before, and he has never shown himself to be anything other than a brave and dedicated fighter. He does go on about his clan, but that is just the dwarf in him.

Brandis: This paladin makes you nervous. Every time he looks at you, it seems like he is judging you. Perhaps he is waiting for you to mess up so he can suggest to your superiors that you be sent to a shrine to live out your days holding afternoon services for dirt farmers. You are simply going to have to show him.

Keira: This poor elf looks lost. She tries to appear relaxed, but it is clearly a show. She obviously has led a hard existence. Maybe you could act as a calming force in her life, if only for the short time you are together.

Jarren: This human is strikingly handsome, and you can almost feel the magical power within him crackling under his skin. It would be interesting to hear about his experiences as an adventurer.

Keira, Female Elf Rogue

You have spent much of your wayward life moving between locales in the Dalelands, staying one step ahead of the people you have swindled. You tell yourself you've done most of your illegal deeds to survive, but you secretly acknowledge that thieving, cheating, bluffing, and running are a great deal of fun.

You come from a family of respected Archendale merchants, and your many trips to Sembia taught you the value of coin and good business sense. With such a heritage, you didn't need to become the person you are. But this nature has always been a part of you. Your trickster's spirit had you slipping away from your nurses to steal cakes and cut loose purses almost as soon as you could walk.

Then one day, you stole from the wrong person, and soon the entire Shadovar network was after you. It tracked you down on several occasions, but each time you wiggled away. Then your luck ran out when a Shadovar agent caught you. But as he was taking you back to the Netherese noble you had swindled, followers of Amaunator swooped in and freed you. Your rescuers introduced you to their leader, Her Radiance Dareen Travaskyr.

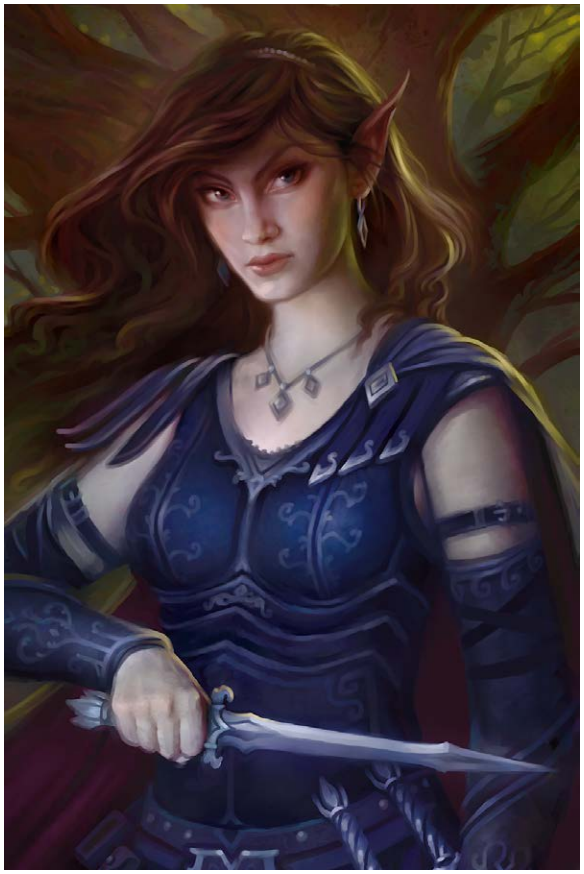
Even though she disapproved of your thieving ways, the priestess appreciated your skills. She had you perform a few simple tasks for her in return for some coin, enough to allow you to live honestly and stay out of trouble. Recently, Dareen charged you with reclaiming a rare ruby from a temple to Amaunator that the Netherese had sacked. She said she needed the ruby so she could complete an important ritual. You slipped past the Netherese, swiped the gemstone, and swiftly returned to Dagger Falls.

Night is fading as you approach the Temple of Lathander's Light. Dareen asked you to bring the gemstone to her at dawn.

Personality

You have lived a fun-loving, adventure-seeking, devil-may-care life. You have acted first and worried about the consequences later. Since that Netherese agent captured you, you haven't felt quite right. Physically you are fine, but mentally you fear you might be unraveling.

You still have urges nudging you to do whatever you want without worrying about the ramifications of those actions. But you have become your own nemesis, sometimes announcing what you intend to do before stealing something or blurting out, "I am lying to you," after telling a fib. You are beginning to fear that the Shadovar might have cursed you with some honesty hex. Nothing could be worse for a rogue.



The Others

Belgos: You've met enough drow in your travels to know they are not all cold-blooded killers. This drow seems civilized and friendly enough.

Fargrim: The worst trait in a potential mark is a nasty temper. If you're caught filching from a calm person, you can talk your way out of it. But angry people are always dangerous. Given this dwarf's sharp tongue, narrowed eyes, and frequent sneers, you are sure the slightest provocation will unhinge him.

Brandis: When you were rescued from that Netherese agent, a lot of armor-clad Amaunator worshipers charged in. This human looks familiar, so you suspect he was among them.

Valenae: This eladrin cleric habitually runs her fingers over a gold holy symbol she wears. It's stunning. You bet it would fetch more than a few gold pieces at the markets.

Jarren: These wizard types have powers that can pull your thoughts from your brain. He probably knows what you are thinking right now. And he is likely cataloging all the terrible things you have ever done. What does he think of the fact that you've traipsed through life snatching whatever you pleased from whomever you liked? Don't look at him!

Jarren, Male Human Wizard

You were born in Baldur's Gate, a child of unskilled laborers. Your parents were employed by a lumber company and were killed when orcs attacked their work site. You spent several seasons at an orphanage before your guardians realized you had magical abilities that irregularly manifested themselves in unsettling ways. Fortunately for you, one of the orphanage overseers knew a wizard who offered to take you on as an apprentice.

Although your master did not mistreat you, he did not love you as a parent might. Your education in magic was second to none, though. You have traveled the world, from the crowded streets of Waterdeep to the majestic earthmotes of Akanûl to the barren plains of Narfell. Your journeys—first as an apprentice to a powerful mage and then as an accomplished evoker—have taught you that friendship and trust are wonderful luxuries, but you must be self-reliant to survive.

Your most recent studies took you to Netheril, where you were offered a rare opportunity to learn from a Shadovar evoker who practically hummed with power and knowledge. Your ability to wield fire and ice improved tremendously under his tutelage.

You have made a few friends during your travels, including Brother Rhobart, a priest of Amaunator. The two of you spent time traveling together, indulging in philosophical debates concerning arcane power, divine power, and the dangers of summoning, among other topics. When Rhobart asked you—on behalf of Her Radiance Dareen Travaskyr the priestess of his temple—to procure an item that had been lost in the Shadow Sea, he already knew you would appreciate the challenge. He wasn't wrong, and you enjoyed testing yourself as you fetched the ruby from an island.

Night is fading as you approach the Temple of Lathander's Light. Rhobart asked you to bring the gemstone to the priestess at dawn.

Personality

Most adventurers try to hack through every problem with the most overt display of power they can muster, whether it be spell, sword, or prayer. You have learned, however, that a little bit of knowledge goes a long way, even in adventuring.

You are accustomed to working alone. But when you work with a group, you are the best prepared to don the leader's mantle. After all, you are almost always the most knowledgeable person in the room about a variety of subjects.

The Others

Belgos: Judging a person by his race is thoughtless. You had a fulfilling experience studying with a Netherese mage, so you could surely have a gratifying meeting with a drow. Besides, this drow seems a lot like the other people who arrived here within moments of you. In fact, he appears rather pleasant.

Fargrim: Given the way this dwarf wears his beard and hair, you are sure he is a descendant of the now-extinct Clan Verigran. Its wizards were considered the preeminent summoners among the dwarves for centuries before a volcanic eruption killed all but a few of the clan. The survivors quickly dispersed to seek their fortunes elsewhere.

Brandis: If there's one thing worse than a paladin, it's a paladin who thinks he knows everything. Something tells you this guy fits that bill and is not afraid to foist his opinions on everyone. Until a person has stared into the dark, pulsating heart of magic, he is in no position to assume a leader's authority.

Valenae: You don't like the holier-than-thou attitude that many of Amaunator's divine followers have, but this cleric has a refreshing approach to communicating with people outside her faith. Unlike the pontificating and pushy paladin Brandis, this young eladrin remains quiet until her opinion is needed.

Keira: This elf bears a striking resemblance to the rogue your Netherese teacher told you swindled him out of a great deal of wealth. The thief had promised to sell your master rare arcane equipment. Maybe she is the same person, but maybe she isn't. If you can make a positive identification, you can give her real name and location to your teacher.

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